

## Israeli premiers gang up to change election law

TEL AVIV (AFP) — Two former Israeli premiers from either end of the political spectrum joined forces Thursday to call for the law which brought Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to power to be overturned. Former Labour Party leader Shimon Peres and Yitzhak Shamir, a member of Netanyahu's Likud Party, announced the formation of an association to repeal the law providing for the direct election of the prime minister before the next poll in 2000. The current law says the prime minister, directly elected for the first time by the Israeli people in May 1996, can only be ousted with a two-thirds majority, or 80 votes in the 120-member parliament, the Knesset. Mr. Shamir said the law had resulted in the introduction of too much "personal power" while Mr. Peres said it had caused serious damage to the democratic process.

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## Arab League ministers to meet in September

CAIRO (AFP) — The Arab League said Friday that foreign ministers from its 22 members will hold their next meeting on September 20 and 21 at the organisation's Cairo headquarters. The ministers, who meet twice a year in March and September, called during their last gathering for Arab countries to freeze normalisation with Israel in protest at its hardline stance towards the Palestinians. September's meeting is likely to address a Middle East economic summit planned two months later which Qatar has said it will host despite an Arab boycott threat because of an invitation to Israel to attend.

## Algerian Islamists deny reports leader is dead

PARIS (AFP) — Algeria's most hardline Islamist group on Friday denied reports that its leader had been killed by security forces. The denial came in a statement from the Armed Islamic Group (GIA) that was sent Friday to the MED-1 radio station in Tangiers. A copy was sent to Agence France Presse. Informal sources said Thursday the GIA leader Antar Zouabri was killed on Tuesday along with several of his lieutenants in an army operation west of Algiers. There was no official confirmation of his death. MED-1 on Thursday said it had received a telephone call from a man claiming to be a high-ranking GIA member, named Mohammad Redouane, denying that Mr. Zouabri had been killed. "Zouabri is not dead," the radio quoted the caller as saying. "He is still alive and fighting alongside his troops."

## Arafat to meet Mubarak on Saturday

GAZA CITY (AFP) — Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat will head to Egypt Saturday to meet with President Hosni Mubarak for consultations on the peace process with Israel, a top adviser said Friday. "President Arafat will meet with President Mubarak within the next 24 hours to fill him in on the latest developments in the peace process," Mr. Arafat aide Nabil Abu Rudeina told AFP. The two leaders will discuss the results of Mr. Arafat's meetings this week with Israeli Foreign Minister David Levy and the head of Israel's opposition Labour Party Ehud Barak, Mr. Abu Rudeina said.

## Israelis oppose unilateral withdrawal from south Lebanon — poll

TEL AVIV (AFP) — More than two-thirds of Israelis are opposed to a unilateral troop withdrawal from south Lebanon, according to a poll published by the daily Yediot Aharanot Friday. Asked whether Israel should withdraw before reaching an agreement with Syria or Lebanon, 69 per cent of those questioned said no while 25 per cent said yes and 6 per cent said they had no opinion. Half of those questioned are hostile to any concessions to Syria to allow the Israeli army to withdraw, while 44 per cent are in favour and six per cent said they are without opinion. The survey questioned 504 Israeli Jews and has a margin of error of four per cent.

# IAF decides to boycott House elections; five leaders resign

By Francesca Ciriaci  
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — The Shura Council of the Islamic Action Front (IAF) decided on Thursday to boycott this November's parliamentary elections, abiding by the decision taken earlier this month by the Muslim Brotherhood.

In protest against their party's decision, five of the IAF's most prominent moderates, including the party's secretary general, Ishaq Farhan, handed in their resignations on Thursday.

The IAF decision was taken with 80 votes in favour and 16 against and was announced by a brief communiqué which did not specify the reasons behind the boycott. However, a party source told the Jordan Times that a statement explaining the reasons behind the decision will be issued today.

Ninety-six of the 120 Shura Council members were present at the three-hour meeting.

The IAF, which won 15 of the 80-member Lower House seats in the 1993 elections, became the fifth

political party to announce the boycott of the elections, to be held according to a government official, on Nov. 4.

The parties which announced on July 20 their decision to boycott are the Jordan People's Democratic Party (Hashd), the Jordan Arab Constitutional Front, the National Action Front and Al Ansar.

If a meeting of the leaders of 11 opposition parties, scheduled for Monday, is to endorse a general boycott decision, only the pro-government National Constitutional Party (NCP) and a few insignificant small parties will be participating in the elections.

Though taken with an overwhelming majority of over 83 per cent — while, according to the movement's chief Abdul Majeed Theibait, the Brotherhood's Shura Council resolved to boycott the elections with a majority vote of 63 per cent only — the IAF decision has already widened the traditional division between "hawks" and "doves" within the front's higher cadres.

The voting suggested that hard-liners in the IAF are

gaining ground, and the resignations of Dr. Farhan and his colleagues could be read as a protest against the trend currently prevailing in the front.

The other members of the 17-strong Executive Committee to resign were Financial Affairs Secretary Ahmad Tanash, secretary Mohammed Awaideh, IAF spokesperson Hamzeh Mansour, and IAF deputy Bassam Emoush.

The five did not participate in Thursday's meeting, neither their resignations were discussed by the Shura Council, which was convened with the only purpose of discussing the elections boycott.

According to the front's internal regulations, the resignations of Dr. Farhan and his colleagues will be effective only after being officially accepted by the Shura Council.

The resignees expressed on different occasions last week their disagreement with the Muslim Brotherhood's boycott resolve.

In a statement to the Jordan News Agency, Petra, early last week, Dr. Mansour expressed disapproval of the Muslim Brother-

hood's decision and stated that "the boycott is against the interests of the Jordanian people and the development of democratic life."

In his weekly column in Al Ra'i Arabic daily, last week, Dr. Emoush rejected as inadequate and illogical the Brotherhood's explanations for the boycott.

The Muslim Brotherhood listed the 1994 peace treaty with Israel and normalisation of ties with the Jewish state, as well as the one-person, one-vote system and recent controversial amendments to the 1993 Press and Publications Law as the reasons prompting its boycott decision.

Dr. Emoush objected to such reasons saying that the Brotherhood should have called on its deputies, who seat in the Lower House under the insignia of the IAF, to resign when Parliament ratified the peace treaty. He also noted that the Brotherhood participated in the 1993 elections, also held with the one-person, one-vote formula, and questioned whether public freedoms were more extensive back at that time.

# Tarawneh says Jordan has no initiative to solve peace crisis

By Sa'eda Kilani  
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Jordan has no plans to undertake any new initiative to break the deadlock in Palestinian-Israeli peace talks as the Kingdom continues to extend full support for the Egyptian mediation efforts to get the two-party negotiations back on track, according to Foreign Minister Fayez Tarawneh.

The minister said that Jordan was in no position to come up with initiatives at this particular time but emphasised that it pursues contacts with all sides to boost peace efforts.

In a meeting earlier this week with the editors of the Jordan Times and its

sister Arabic daily Al Ra'i, Mr. Tarawneh said that serious efforts are being made by various parties to save the peace process from collapse but there hasn't been any breakthroughs. "Jordan is in no position to offer its own initiative, but it continues to support Egyptian mediation to break the deadlock," he said. "Any Jordanian initiative should be made in coordination with Egypt."

"Jordan is also pursuing its contacts with Israel in a bid to achieve what is best for the Palestinians."

The minister did not comment on the visit of Israeli opposition leader Ehud Barak to Jordan on Monday. He only said that

it was an ordinary visit that is similar to the King's meetings with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu when the latter was an opposition leader.

In a report on the short visit, the English language Israeli newspaper, the Jerusalem Post, quoted Mr. Barak, the head of the Labour Party, as saying that the "urgency of the visit (was) a reflection of the depth of King Hussein's concern, similar to the concern expressed by Mubarak last week... and his worry about the danger of armed conflict between Israel and the Palestinians."

A Jordanian-Egyptian summit between the King and Egyptian President

Hosni Mubarak is expected to be held later this week, according to published reports. But no official announcement had been made in this regard.

The foreign minister, underlining the importance of Arab joint efforts, refuted arguments that the Egyptian moves have been unsuccessful so far and stressed that contacts are still underway to make them bear fruit. All parties, however, seem to agree on keeping negotiations away from media's eyes so as not to generate negativities and cause further complications to the peace process.

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## Tarawneh says improving refugee living standards does not settle them

By Ghailia Alal  
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Foreign Minister Fayez Tarawneh defended the Social Safety Net programme and said that improving the living conditions of the poor does not have ulterior motives.

In an interview with the Jordan Times earlier this week, Mr. Tarawneh said Jordan is keen on fighting poverty and unemployment while successfully pursuing economic and political reform plans.

"Improving living standards of refugees does not mean that Jordan is trying to settle them," Mr. Tarawneh said. "There are 235,000 refugees among the 800,000 people living under the poverty line and who need assistance. Jordan is helping to alleviate their suffering."

The Social Safety Net is an inclusive programme aimed at improving the quality of life in the less fortunate areas on non-discriminatory basis. The

social productivity package was introduced a few months ago and is expected to be implemented on short, medium and long-term phases.

Minister Tarawneh said that political and economic reforms have not been highly appreciated so far because of internal and external circumstances that have hampered their proper development, but pledged that dividends will be felt in the near future.

The reforms "are going to hurt us at the outset, just as it is the convalescence phase of a patient. But this transitional period will come to an end soon and will bear a beneficial outcome in the long run."

He also pointed to the recent meeting with the World Trade Organisation (WTO) that ended successfully.

"There was no doubt that Jordan did very well in the first round of negotiations. The talks were highly successful," Mr. Tarawneh, former

ambassador to Washington, said Jordan has been diligently working on upgrading its economy and improving its industry to meet international standards. It has also introduced a new set of economic legislations to encourage privatisation, steps which are bound to streamline the Jordanian economy into the global economy.

The minister stressed the importance of liberalising the Palestinian economy and trade. He also regretted that Jordanian-Palestinian trade exchange is still insubstantial.

"We have always put the blame of the absence of trade exchange between Jordan and Palestine on Israel's occupation," he said. "We should start looking into the other obstacles that are hampering such an exchange on both banks."

"We have to take practical steps to promote commercial exchange. It is a vital issue in the liberalisation of Palestinian trade," he added.

## Israel snatches Jihad man from PNA territory

OCUPIED JERUSALEM (R) — Israeli undercover forces snatched a wanted Islamic Jihad activist from a PNA-ruled West Bank enclave in a violation of peace agreements, Palestinian security sources said on Friday.

They said an Israeli force dressed as Arabs spirited Ghassan Mahdawi from a Tulkarem park late on Thursday. In protest, the Palestine National Authority (PNA) halted joint patrols with Israel through the city.

The Israeli army confirmed it had arrested Mr. Mahdawi, who it accused of setting up a "terrorist gang" to carry out attacks on Israelis, but refused to say where it had captured him.

## Iraq says unidentified aircraft flares burn farms

BAGHDAD (AP) — Iraq said Thursday unidentified aircraft dropped incendiary flares on wheat and barley farms in the central province of Diyala earlier this week. There were no reports of injury. The official Iraqi News Agency said the flares which were dropped late Monday night, burnt a number of privately-owned farms in Diyala, 50 kilometres north of the capital Baghdad. It did not identify the aircraft, but Iraq has in the past accused U.S. warplanes of dropping flares on wheat and barley plantations in the northern part of the country, setting them on fire. The United States has denied the charges. U.S. and its Western allies patrol a no-fly zone in the north of the country to protect the Kurdish population from attacks by Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein's army.



Jerusalem Mayor Ehud Olmert standing outside his offices Friday with the Old City of Jerusalem, including the Dome of the Rock, and the Mount of Olives (behind, right) visible. He had just given a press conference defending the Israeli decision to build a Jewish enclave in the heart of Arab east Jerusalem. The decision by the Jerusalem City Council to allow a U.S. Jewish businessman, Irving Moskowitz, to build a settlement of 132 units in the Ras Al-Amoud Arab neighbourhood (seen, top, far right) has infuriated Palestinians (Reuters photo)

## Israel gives authority to build new settlement in Arab east Jerusalem

OCUPIED JERUSALEM (AFP) — Israeli authorities in Jerusalem have given the green light to a new Jewish settlement in the Arab east of the city, in a potentially explosive move which Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu vowed to stop Friday.

The Palestinians branded the plan a "declaration of war," coming amid a four-month crisis in the peace process sparked by the building of another settle-

ment in occupied Arab east Jerusalem.

Jerusalem's Municipal Authority, led by rightwing Mayor Ehud Olmert, authorised an American millionaire to build 70 Jewish homes in the heart of the Arab neighbourhood of Ras Al Amoud Thursday.

Mr. Netanyahu sees that the building is legal but has pledged to "find a way to stop this project from seeing the light of day for the

time being," his spokesman said.

The prime minister "feels it is not appropriate to build in the middle of an Arab neighbourhood at this time," his press adviser David Bar Illan told AFP.

The project "has obtained all the necessary legal authorisations, so there is no way to attack it on the judicial front," he said, but added that Mr. Netanyahu

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## Israeli Arabs demonstrate for return of old mosque

BEERSHEVA (AFP) — Hundreds of Israeli Arabs tried Friday to pray in a mosque converted into a museum in southern Israel, but the local authority kept them away by dumping garbage in front of the building, police said.

Several hundred Muslims, mainly bedouins from the Negev Desert, gathered outside the Negev Museum in Beersheva demanding to carry out their weekly Friday prayers there.

But Israeli municipal official, Eli Boker, dumped several tonnes of municipal

rubbish in front of the museum to prevent them from getting any nearer. The Muslims put down plastic bags so they could kneel in prayer.

Around 100 policemen were deployed to separate the bedouins from a group of Israeli counter-demonstrators who chanted "Arabs, out" and "terrorists" and whistled to disturb the Muslims at prayer.

The bedouins demand the return to religious purposes of the mosque that was built in 1906. They have not been allowed into the

mosque since the creation of the state of Israel in 1948 and it has since been turned into a museum.

Taleb Sana, an MP from the United Arab List, said the demonstrators "will return every week until they get their mosque back."

Mr. Boker, however, declared that "Arabs living outside Beersheva cannot come here and lay down the law."

"Our town will not become a second Hebron," the municipal official said.

## Butler, Iraq draw up action plan on disarmament; both sides optimistic

BAGHDAD (AFP) — U.N. disarmament chief, Richard Butler, said Friday he had drawn up an action plan with Baghdad on the elimination of Iraqi weapons of mass destruction and hoped to see progress in a matter of weeks. "We have designed some work tasks in each of the areas of missiles, chemical and biological weapons that we will now implement in the weeks and months ahead," Mr. Butler said as he wrapped up a five-day visit to Iraq. Mr. Butler, the new chairman of the U.N. Special Commission (UNSCOM) for Iraq's disarmament, said he hoped that in three or four weeks time we may see some concrete and practical results.

He hailed what he called "a new spirit of cooperation between Iraq and UNSCOM and a new sense of determination to get done, as soon as possible, the job of eliminating Iraq's weapons of mass destruction."

Mr. Butler arrived in Kuwait later on Friday to brief the Kuwaiti government on his first visit to Iraq. The UNSCOM head said

in Kuwait he held a "number of one-on-one" talks with Iraqi Deputy Prime Minister Tareq Aziz as well as "full-scale technical and plenary meetings with large teams from both sides."

"I thought that on the whole I got a positive response" from Iraqi officials, Mr. Butler said. He also talked of the plans that had been worked out.

"Those plans address the weapons systems in the three baskets — missile, chemical and biological — where it is important that Iraq come forward and give more to the commission on those baskets and what's in them, so that we can verify that and hopefully empty them," he said.

Asked if he found any evidence Iraq was concealing weapons or weapons capabilities, he said: "I don't want to answer that question because it would go into the substance of private consultations and at this stage it wouldn't be helpful to our progress for me to answer that question."

Swedish diplomat Rolf Ekeus, Mr. Butler's prede-

cessor, accused Iraq of hiding its weapons secrets. Baghdad charged that Mr. Ekeus was spying for the United States and fabricating negative reports to have U.N. sanctions kept in place in line with U.S. policy.

Butler's visit here would include meeting on Saturday with Emir Sheikh Jaber Al Ahmad Al Sabah, Acting Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Al Ahmad Al Sabah and other officials.

"It is very important to me to have the opportunity to hear the views and concerns of the government of Kuwait at a very senior level about the tasks that UNSCOM is obliged to undertake on behalf of the Security Council," he said.

Mr. Butler is due to travel to Bahrain on Sunday.

The Australian diplomat arrived in Baghdad on Monday vowing to be "absolutely fair" in his dealings with Iraq and to steer clear of any political confrontation.

Iraq has vowed to cooperate with the new UNSCOM chief and make a fresh start.







## King to open medical conference

AMMAN (Petra) — His Majesty King Hussein is today slated to open the Jordanian-U.S. medical conference at the Radisson SAS hotel.

Attendance is slated to reach into the hundreds with an estimated 250 doctors hailing from the United States.

Dr. Mohammad Nahir Abul Dahab described the meeting, to last until Aug. 1, as exemplifying close cooperation between Jordanian physicians and specialists and their American counterparts.

The meeting, organised by the Jordan Medical Association (JMA) in cooperation with the Muslim Doctors Society in North America and assorted American medical schools, is to review more than 100 reports.

These will cover internal diseases, gynaecology and obstetrics, and other topics, according to Dr. Abdul Dahab

who is on the conference executive committee.

He told a press conference Friday that delegates will also attend a seminar on medical training in the United States, with American specialists outlining the nature of the courses.

The meeting will be attended by Jordanian doctors and specialists from the private and public sector as well as the Royal Medical Services of the Jordan Armed Forces.

Conference attendance is a requirement by the continued medical education course followed by the University of Illinois in the United States and is equal to 20 credit hours for attending students.

The JMA is convening an exhibition, displaying medical equipment supplied by local and foreign firms, auxiliary to the conference, Dr. Abdul Dahab concluded.

## 45.9% of participating students pass tawjihi

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Ministry of Education Friday announced the results of the 1997 tawjihi examinations, stating that 45.9 per cent of the students who took the test actually passed.

Announcing the results at a press conference in his office, Minister of Education and Higher Education Munther Masri described the total number of students who took the examination, set in accordance with a newly-introduced system, was 68,913 of whom 31,686 passed.

Last year, 46.7 per cent of those taking the test actually passed.

The following are the test results as reported by Dr. Masri:

A total of 34,131 students took the literary examination and 13,835 of these passed; 23,770 persons took the scientific exam with 13,543 passing; 966 students took the Sharia (Islamic studies) examination with 364 passing.

A total of 4,140 students took the commerce exam with 1,578 passing; 3,080 students took the industrial exam with 1,176 passing; 964 students took the nursing exam of whom 554 passed; 423 students took the hotel management exam of whom 194 passed.



Minister of Education and Higher Education Munther Masri announces results of the 1997 tawjihi exams (Petra photo)

891 took the domestic economy course of whom 270 passed, 548 students took the agricultural course and 172 passed the exam.

A total of 1,426 students took the newly-introduced vocational training examination and 342 passed.

Of this last group, according to Dr. Masri, those who passed the exam are eligible to pursue their university education in same fashion as their col-

leagues who passed the examination in other categories. Observers believe that the majority of students who did pass the exam will still be unable to attend universities in Jordan as they have failed to attain requirements set last week by the Council of Higher Education (CHE).

According to these rules, only students with minimum average grades of 80 per cent are to be admitted to scientific faculties and

only students with minimum average grades of 65 per cent will be permitted to submit applications for other faculties.

Meanwhile, the scholarship department at the Ministry of Education and Higher Education has requested that those students who passed their tawjihi exams apply for scholarships in foreign countries for the upcoming scholastic year from July 27-29.

## Kingdom, Malaysia cover cultural, Islamic issues

AMMAN (Petra) — Jordan and Malaysia Friday discussed cooperation in cultural and Islamic fields.

The two countries agreed to hold alternate meetings in Amman and Kuala Lumpur to discuss Islamic-related issues as well as the question of Zakat (alms) in the Islamic World.

Minister of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs Abdul Salam Abbadi and his Malaysian counterpart

Abdul Hamid Othman convened the meeting in the presence of officials from both countries.

They also discussed bilateral ties, cooperation in both political and economic fields, and the interchange of Islamic publications and expertise, notably in Arabic and Islamic instruction.

The issue of postgraduate student acceptance in Jordanian universities and institutes of higher educa-

tion as well as teacher and student exchange visits was also covered at the meeting.

According to the Ministry of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs, more than 45,000 Malaysians visited Jordan in 1996.

Earlier, the Malaysian delegation visited the King Abdullah Mosque Cultural Centre where it toured the Hashemite exhibition. The exhibit depicts various holy sites including Al

Haram Al Sharif in Jerusalem as well as Muslim holy shrines in the Kingdom.

Dr. Abbadi and the Malaysian delegation reviewed the ministry's various activities as well as the work of the Hashemite Charity Organisation which has been active in providing disaster relief to Muslim societies in need of such.

## French medal conferred upon director general of Jordan Radio and Television

AMMAN (Petra) —

French Ambassador to Jordan Bernard Bajolet Thursday stated that France and Jordan will conclude an agreement promoting cooperation between the French and Jordanian television and radio corporations in the coming week.

In a ceremony to present the distinguished French medal "Commander" to Director General of Jordan Radio and Television Ihsan Ramzi for his role in promoting cultural cooperation between France and Jordan, Mr. Bajolet affirmed that French President Jacques Chirac decided last May to present the medal to Mr. Ramzi in recognition of the corporation's role in strengthening bilateral relations.

The medal is one of the highest orders in France, he added.

Mr. Ramzi contributed to the production of the first French-Arab programme to teach French in the Arab World through Jordan Television in conjunction with a French firm, Mr. Bajolet recalled.

He praised the director



French Ambassador to Jordan Bernard Bajolet Thursday confers the distinguished French medal "Commander" upon Director General of Jordan Radio and Television Ihsan Ramzi (Petra photo)

general for his efforts in helping to establish television stations in Qatar and Oman as well as Sharjah in the United Arab Emirates.

In reply, Mr. Ramzi thanked the French government, stressing his determination to further

strengthen bilateral ties in educational and cultural fields.

Stressing that the French honour is equally shared amongst the entire corporation staff, Mr. Ramzi suggested that France establish

Amman as a cultural cooperation centre at the regional level.

Jordan is a member of the Euro-Arab Broadcasting Union and has been instrumental in promoting cultural exchange through media in Europe and the Arab World, he concluded.

## Civil Aviation Authority undergoes restructuring

AMMAN (Petra) — The

Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) is currently undergoing restructuring in order to operate on a commercial basis and cater to international requirements. CAA Director General Captain Jaser Ziyad stated Friday.

As global attention is being directed towards membership in the World Trade Organisation (WTO), it is inevitable that Jordan, which is seeking free trade, end all forms of monopoly and state privileges, Capt. Ziyad stated.

Potential WTO membership obligates Jordan to reexamine the CAA legal system and restructure the department in a manner which caters to the former's requirements and conditions, he said.

The CAA has contracted an international consultancy firm which has worked out a strategy for the restructuring process to be completed in

## Jordan, Israel discuss Aqaba airport

AMMAN (AFP) — Minister of Tourism Akel Biltaji

and his Israeli counterpart, Moshe Katzav, Thursday discussed plans for joint tourism promotion, according to the Jordan News Agency, Petra.

The two ministers, who met in the Israeli Red Sea city of Eilat, discussed plans to launch joint advertising campaigns in Europe, Canada, the United States and the Middle East.

They also decided to facilitate the granting of visas to Israeli tourists wanting to visit Jordan and to Jordanians wishing to go

to Israel, Petra said.

Jordan and Israel, which signed a peace treaty in October of 1994, have a tourism cooperation agreement.

Amman decided, at the end of June, to freeze an agreement allowing Israeli civilian aircraft to use the airport in the southern Jordanian city of Aqaba because of Israeli security demands which Jordan called unacceptable.

The peace treaty had called for making Aqaba a "peace airport" to serve southern Israel and Jordan.

approximately one year, Capt. Ziyad affirmed.

It is now awaiting the government's final

approval, he added.

The most exemplary system, ensuring success, is one based on a system

of free trade and one which is not under government monopoly nor subsidy but operating on purely commercial basis, Capt. Ziyad stated.

Referring to the Aqaba airport, he confirmed that since the 1994 peace treaty, Jordan and Israel have been working towards the creation of an airport in Aqaba to serve regional air travel and transport.

Negotiations are ongoing with Israelis regarding the project and an American firm is to conduct a feasibility study pertaining thereto, he said.

There still exist some outstanding issues to be settled before the joint project can be enacted, according to Capt. Ziyad.

International flights scheduled for Eilat will be diverted to Aqaba in September, once Israel and Jordan have reached final agreement on the project, he concluded.

## Islamic conference calls for action to solve youth problems

AMMAN (J.T.) — Muslim scholars on Thursday welcomed His Majesty King Hussein's call to create a child educational strategy and called on Muslim states to respond to this call and to prepare a survey on the state of youths in Islamic countries in order to draw action plans.

In a concluding session, President of the Royal Academy for Islamic Research (Al al Bayt Foundation) Nassereddin Al Assad emphasised that the conference which was held under the title: "Islam and Present Day Social Problems" focused on cooperation among Muslim scholars in order to come up with a plan to solve the problems of Muslim and Arab worlds.

The attendees highlighted the need to modernise and upgrade the regulations and laws pertaining to children.

Participants also called on the Islamic World to direct their attention to solve the problem of homeless refugees and those who lost their nationalities in accordance with the teachings of Islam, human rights and the principles of the Geneva Convention with

the aim of protecting them, caring for them and ensuring their safe-return home, particularly the Muslim refugees who constitute 70 per cent of world refugees.

The participants hoped that His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan's call for the establishment of the Global Zakat Foundation would receive a positive response from those concerned and cooperate in bringing it to light.

They also stressed the need to establish foundations that would uncover children's talents and develop them.

The participants also proposed subjects for the next session of the Royal Academy for Islamic Civilisation Research namely: "What Have We Prepared For The Next Century," "The Requirements of The New Century" and "We and The Media Revolution."

## WHAT'S GOING ON

### JERASH FESTIVAL

\* Concert by Wa'el Kfouri at the South Theatre at 8:30 p.m.

\* Concert by the Bafuchi Group of Chile at the North Theatre at 8:30 p.m.

\* Concert by the Family International at Artemis Steps at 8:30 p.m.

\* Performance by Schleswig-Holstein band of Germany at the Sound and Light Theatre at 8:30 p.m.

\* Children's play "The Young Pedlar" at Grotto Theatre at 8:00 p.m.

\* Musical performances by Jordanian and Italian bands and circus displays at the main square at 7:00 p.m.

\* Display of handicrafts and sculptures at Zeus vault.

### LECTURE

\* "Khirbet Iskander" by Suzanne Richard and Jesse Long at the American Center of Oriental Research (Tel. 846-117) at 7:00 p.m.

### EXHIBITIONS

\* Paintings and ceramics sculptures by Arab artists at the Orient Gallery, Shmeisani (Tel. 681303) until July 31.

\* Display of Bani Hamida hand-made products at Bani Hamida House, Jabal Amman, until July 31 (Tel. 6586967).

\* Photo exhibition entitled "Jerusalem in Danger" by Khalid Al Zaghari at the Modern Educational School, Khaldi, until July 31.

\* Photography exhibition by Jan Kassy, at the French Cultural Centre, Jabal Weibdeh, until July 29.

\* Paintings by Ali Al Ghoul at Greater Amman Municipality Cultural Department, Ras Al 'Ain, until July 31.

## Antelope smugglers arrested at border

AMMAN (J.T.) — Badia and border police units arrested persons who had been found with 12 white antelopes from the Al Shau-mari Wildlife Reserve in their possession, according to RSCN Spokesman Khal-doun Kiwan Friday.

The suspects were planning to smuggle the animals abroad, he added.

Officials returned the animals to the Royal Society for the Conservation of Nature (RSCN) which organisation is responsible for the Kingdom's six reserves.

The suspects were accosted near Rweished, close to the Iraqi border, last Monday, Mr. Kiwan affirmed.

The thieves had originally stolen a total of 14 antelopes from the reserve and were heading towards the eastern borders when they were stopped by police close to the border region, he explained.

Two of the animals died in voyage, according to Mr. Kiwan.

He explained that the retrieved animals, one female and 11 males, are currently undergoing medical

testing at the reserve's quarantine unit.

The retrieved animals will be inoculated against diseases before their release in the Shau-mari reserve, he added.

Stating appreciation for the badia and border police work, Mr. Kiwan described the animals as constituting part of the nation's natural wealth.

He issued a public appeal that persons help prevent smuggling or trading in animals which are currently in danger of extinction as well as those which are being

cared for by staff in national reserves.

The RSCN, a private, voluntary organisation, established in 1966, is dedicated to the conservation of nature and natural resources.

It cares for different types of species of animals under threat of extinction such as the Arabian Oryx, the White Antelope, the Ibex, the Mountain Gazelle and Fallow Deer at its Shau-mari, Azraq, Wadi Mujib, Zubiya, Dana and Rum wildlife reserves.

## NEWS IN BRIEF

### UNRWA to fix camp infrastructures

AMMAN (Petra) — The United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestinians (UNRWA) has announced its intention to implement infrastructure maintenance works in refugee camps in Irbid, Wihdat, Baqaa and Zarqa.

### Minister announces court inspections

AMMAN (Petra) — Minister of Justice Riyadh Shakaa Friday stated that four judges will be appointed to inspect various tribunal performances and will report their findings to the Higher Judicial Council.

### 'Family planning up to couple'

AMMAN (Petra) — Sharia' Faculty Dean at the University of Jordan Mahmoud Sartawi Friday affirmed that, according to Islam, family planning is the prerogative of the couple concerned. "Islam guides people and takes economic and social conditions into consideration," he said.

### Volunteer children's camps close

AMMAN (Petra) — Minister of Education and Higher Education Munther Masri sponsored the closing ceremony of volunteer camps convened in Dibeen, near Ajloun. The camps aim at acquainting participants with various areas of the Kingdom and fostering their loyalty and diligence to the nation, Dr. Masri stated.



# Alleged Versace killer's suicide leaves many riddles

MIAMI BEACH (R) —

The suicide of Andrew Cunanan, suspected of killing fashion designer Gianni Versace and four other men, ended a nationwide manhunt and brought relief to Miami's terrified gay community.

But it left many questions about his tawdry saga unanswered.

"The big one is why? Why did Andrew Cunanan select his victims, why did he begin this rampage, why did he end it in the way he did?" asked Miami Beach Police Chief Richard Barreto.

"Unfortunately I don't know that we are ever going to know the answers," he said, speaking on CNN's Larry King Live.

Police confirmed Thursday that Cunanan himself was his final victim, ending an alleged cross-country spree of killing that began in April.

Cornered in a houseboat a few miles from the elegant oceanfront mansion where he is accused of shooting Versace on July 15, the 27-year-old fugitive put a pistol in his mouth after a caretaker stumbled upon him, and pulled the trigger.

Police stormed the dwelling and "found the body of a white male lying (sic) on a bed in the upstairs master bedroom," FBI Agent Keith Evans said in an affidavit.

"The white male was obviously deceased due to large amounts of blood seen coming from his ears,

mouth and nose and he had a semi-automatic handgun lying on his groin."

The 40-calibre pistol was the same kind as the one already linked by the FBI to the murders of Versace and two of his other four alleged victims. CNN quoted authorities as saying tests had proven the suicide weapon was the same gun.

"Everybody had his photo, everybody had his face," said FBI Agent Paul Philip, saying one of the biggest manhunt in U.S. history left Cunanan nowhere to go.

Mr. Evans said a safe found at the houseboat "may contain more evidence related to the five homicides." Police took it away along with an address book and financial records for perusal.

Cunanan, described by his own mother as a "high-class prostitute," left no suicide note that would explain why he committed his alleged crimes.

One man who might help answer some of the outstanding questions was the owner of the houseboat in Miami Beach's affluent Indian Creek neighbourhood.

The FBI had located the owner in Las Vegas, Deputy Director William Esposito told a Washington news conference.

He was being cooperative and "probably being interviewed as we speak," Mr. Esposito said. He added that he was unaware whether the owner and Cunanan had a prior relationship.

Local media have named him as Torsten Reineck, a German citizen who also owns a gay health club in Las Vegas. German police said Thursday they believed Mr. Reineck might be a fugitive they had been seeking since 1992.

Mr. Esposito said Cunanan had contacted an unidentified associate right after Versace's murder about obtaining false identification and a passport so he could flee the United States. Police had named Cunanan as their only suspect in the murder of Versace, a tourist to rock stars and royalty whose admirers worldwide were grief-stricken by his death.

Fernando Carreira, the houseboat caretaker whose telephone call led police to Cunanan, said he was glad to be alive.

"He was a dangerous man, he could shoot anyone," Mr. Carreira said on local television.

He said he thought he deserved the \$45,000 reward for information leading to Cunanan's arrest. Mr. Barreto said, however, that the tip-off had never mentioned Cunanan and that he was not sure Mr. Carreira qualified.

A local TV station asked viewers to call in and vote on whether he should get the money.

Forensic tests had not yet established whether Cunanan was HIV-positive, a factor which some criminologists have suggested might have fuelled his drive to kill.

His exact relationship to Versace is a mystery although the two, both homosexual, are reported to have met socially.

News of Cunanan's death brought relief to Miami Beach, a Mecca for tourists and for gays, who had lived in fear and anxiety while the suspected killer remained on the loose.

Miami Beach Mayor Seymour Gelber told Reuters: "We're accustomed to greeting tourists, not searching out killers ... The last 10 days have been rather dreary."

In Milan, the Versace family said they were relieved and grateful to those who helped to resolve the murder.

Attorney General Janet Reno and FBI Chief Louis Freeh said his death concluded "one of the most massive fugitive manhunt in American law enforcement history."

Cunanan was on the FBI's 10 Most Wanted List of fugitives even before the Versace slaying. He was also wanted for the murders of his friend Jeffrey Trail, 28, in late April his former lover David Madison, 33, in May Miglin, 72, and William Reese, 45.

Versace, 50, was cremated in Miami last week and the ashes placed in a vault in Italy Friday.



Technicians with the Dade County Coroner's Office wheel the body of 27-year-old Andrew Cunanan from a Miami Beach houseboat Thursday. Cunanan, wanted for the murder of fashion designer Gianni Versace and four others, was found dead of an apparent suicide, police said (Reuters photo)

## Yeltsin vows to press ahead with military reforms

MOSCOW (AFP) —

Russian President Boris Yeltsin vowed Friday to push ahead with controversial reform of the Russian military, telling Russian Radio the reforms have started and will not be halted.

Speaking on Russian Radio, Mr. Yeltsin said: "The important thing now is to keep up the rhythm. We can wait no longer."

He reaffirmed his intention to cut armed forces personnel from 1.7 million to 1.2 million in two years. The half a million people, mainly officers of the former Soviet Red Army, who will leave would get social benefits, he said.

Mr. Yeltsin admitted the issue was controversial and that many people, including top military leaders, believe Russia does not have the financial means to carry out such widespread reforms.

"I know that some say starting (reform) today will lead to the destruction of the army," the Russian president said.

"I know these critics are, for the most part, concerned with the fate of the army, but those calling for reform are not less worried for the future of the armed forces."

"Of course, it would be better to be in a more appropriate financial situation. But we can wait no longer," he said.

Some of the demobilised soldiers might be taken into a vast training project, previously announced by Mr. Yeltsin, to send thousands of young Russians to train abroad.

Mr. Yeltsin also repeated his pledge to pay off the wage debt to military servicemen by Sept. 1 and added that arrears in subsidies and social payments for soldiers and their families would be settled by Jan. 1.

The Russian leader also promised to address the problem of living quarters for servicemen. In principle, each soldier has the right to an apartment, but 97,000 families are denied this right, he admitted.

Since July 16, Mr. Yeltsin has signed a series of measures to speed up reforms of the former Red Army.

He plans to streamline the armed forces by slashing the number of generals by 20 per cent, to 2,300 from the current level of 2,865.

He ordered the privatisation of 9,000 army-run shops and cafes, along with sports installations and repair services and the sale of military-owned property. Income from the sales will finance new housing projects.

## U.S. labs redesign nuclear warheads

ALBUQUERQUE (R) —

New Mexico's nuclear weapons laboratories are designing a possible replacement for nuclear warheads on U.S. Navy Trident submarines, the first design change since the end of the cold war, lab officials said Thursday.

Heinz Schmitt, a vice-president at Albuquerque's Sandia National Laboratories, said no decision had been made to build any newly designed warheads, but the U.S. military wanted to be prepared should the existing W88 warheads develop problems as they age.

Similar redesign efforts will be required over the next few decades for the five other nuclear weapons that will remain in the U.S. nuclear arsenal, Mr. Schmitt said.

Arms control groups said the design work undermined the 1970 Non-Proliferation Treaty signed by the United States and other nuclear powers.

A worldwide nuclear test ban in place since President Bill Clinton signed the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty last September also could short-circuit design efforts because test blasts would have to be conducted with the new warheads.

"The United States agreed to enter into negotiations to accomplish nuclear disarmament," said Greg Mello of the Los Alamos Study Group, a Santa Fe, New Mexico, arms control organisation that revealed details of the new design work earlier this week.

"This design work shows a commitment to build new nuclear weapons ... and optimise the arsenal for post-cold war conditions," he said.

Mr. Schmitt countered that the work on the navy missile warhead did not constitute "new nuclear weapon."

"The pressure on this effort is to see how we can replace it and meet the same requirements," he said. "This is not an attempt to bring in a new system."

Since the end of the cold war, the United States has dismantled many of its nuclear weapons. But the military still retains a stockpile, and Congress and the White House have charged New Mexico's nuclear weapons labs with the job of ensuring it remains safe and reliable.

Western governments have been worried since the breakup of the Soviet Union in 1991 that nuclear materials could be stolen in the former Soviet bloc and put into nuclear weapons within reach of non-nuclear states.

A nuclear expert told Reuters in April the only known theft of enough weapons-grade nuclear material to make a bomb was in August 1994, when German police seized 363 grammes of plutonium-239 from a courier on a flight to Munich from Moscow.

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## Albanian parliament elects president, lifts curfew

TIRANA (R) —

Albania's new parliament Thursday lifted a five-month curfew and elected a respected academic as the country's president in first steps to end nationwide anarchy.

Socialist Party Secretary-General Rexhep Mejdani, a former physics professor, entered politics only last year and was never a member of Albania's once all-powerful Communist Party.

He replaces Sali Berisha, who resigned Wednesday to take up a seat as an opposition deputy for his Democratic Party, which suffered a resounding defeat in June 29 elections.

Several newspapers Thursday published pictures of Mr. Mejdani, 52, standing smiling with the U.S. ambassador at Wednesday's opening of parliament.

The sole candidate, Mr. Mejdani was elected by 110 votes to three with two abstentions and seven invalid ballots.

Earlier, parliament voted unanimously to lift the state of emergency imposed on March 2 with immediate effect, ending a nationwide 10 p.m. to 5 a.m. curfew.

Deputies of parliament's new Socialist majority said the move got their government off to a good start. "We should replace the

## 3 dead in Albania blast

TIRANA (R) — Rescue workers were Friday searching rubble after an explosion rocked a residential building in the capital, killing at least three people and injuring others.

The blast occurred in the city's central district, near the capital's main square. The injured have been taken to hospitals in Tirana.

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## China president sees further growth in U.S. ties

BEIJING (R) —

China's long-troubled relations with the United States have warmed steadily in recent months and now see an opportunity for swifter improvement, China's President Jiang Zemin said.

"Despite great changes in today's international situation, the common interests between the two great countries, China and the U.S., in maintaining world peace and promoting economic growth and social progress are expanding rather than diminishing," the official People's Daily Friday quoted Mr. Jiang as telling former U.S. President Jimmy Carter.

Sino-U.S. relations had improved and expanded steadily since the start of this year, Mr. Jiang told Mr. Carter Thursday.

Mr. Jiang, who also heads the ruling Communist Party and is commander-in-chief of the military, has this year repeatedly stressed the importance of ties with United States to ensure strong momentum toward a long-awaited

summit with U.S. President Bill Clinton in October.

Mr. Jiang has been eager to pay a state visit to the United States ever since he was appointed to lead the party by late paramount leader Deng Xiaoping after the army crushed student-led demonstrations for more democracy in 1989.

Diplomats say Mr. Jiang is clearly anxious that no hiccup in relations throws the summit into doubt.

"Current bilateral ties are experiencing an important opportunity for further growth," Mr. Jiang was quoted as telling Mr. Carter in a meeting at the seaside resort of Beidaihe where China's leaders go each year to escape the sweltering summer heat in Beijing and to set policy for the next 12 months.

Mr. Jiang said he hoped China and the United States would continue to make efforts to build long-term stable and healthy ties, the People's Daily reported.

The two nations should develop ties "with an eye

to the 21st century by increasing mutual trust and strengthening cooperation," Mr. Jiang was quoted as saying.

The main reason China and the United States were able to establish ties in 1978, during Mr. Carter's presidency, was because their leaders were aware of the vital common interests between the two countries, Mr. Jiang said.

On Thursday, Mr. Carter said Beijing and Washington had lost sight of the vision that led to ties in 1978, a reference to disputes marring relations in recent years, but stressed that shared interests meant Sino-U.S. relations were as vital as ever.

U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright was to meet Chinese Foreign Minister Qian Qichen in Kuala Lumpur Saturday on the fringes of the Association of South East Asian Nations meeting for new talks aimed at preparing for the Sino-U.S. summit, U.S. officials said Thursday.

Officials say privately that discussion is focusing on Oct. 28 as a possible summit date.

A delegation of U.S. officials was in Beijing this week for working level talks on the summit and some would join Mr. Albright in Malaysia to brief her on their meetings.

One official called the Clinton-Jiang summit the "most important meeting between the two countries in a decade."

Despite a scandal in Washington on allegations of Chinese efforts to influence the 1996 U.S. election, U.S. officials are upbeat about the current process of engagement with Beijing that is intended to keep ties improving after a period of dangerous deterioration.

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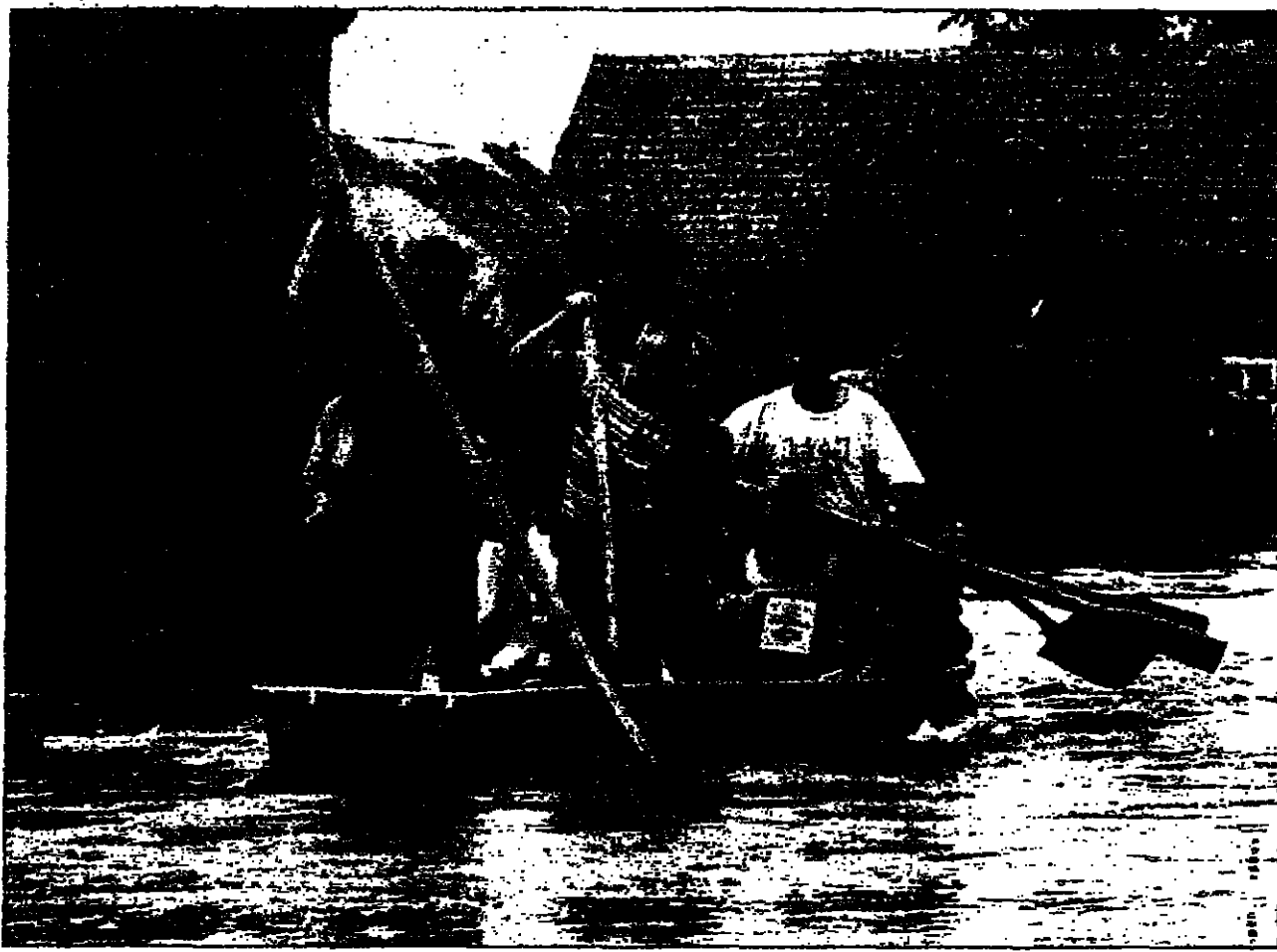
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A group of farmers paddle their boat as they try to reach their flooded homes in the southern village of Kosienice, Thursday. The Odra River surge, caused by last weekend's renewed rain flooded many villages again. More than 2,900 out of a total of 6,090 square kilometres lay under water, affected during the disaster (Reuters photo)

## Embattled Poles reinforce dykes on swollen Odra

WARSAW (R) — New surges of high water coursed Thursday along Poland's Odra (Oder), which scoured its riverbank communities earlier this month, and officials said weakened dykes could break at any place or time.

"Along the whole Odra except the lower reaches, as the dykes are soaked and eroded, they could go anywhere at any moment," said Marek Sobczak of Poland's Flood Crisis Committee.

He said a dyke which broke Wednesday on the German side, where the river runs along the border south of Frankfurt an der Oder, starkly illustrated the dangers.

"It suddenly went and that was that," Mr. Sobczak said. Troops, firemen and volunteers waited at key points to repair any flaws in defences along the major waterway which has brought grief and death since downpours early this month unleashed the region's worst natural disaster in centuries.

The main new Odra surge, caused by last weekend's renewed rain over the country's heavily-flooded south, appeared to be slowly passing the southwestern city of Opolé, where a larger swell this month submerged downtown streets.

The wave, a lesser repeat of the high water in the second week of July, was now approaching the flood-ravaged city of Wrocław on its way towards the German

border and the sea.

Mr. Sobczak said Wrocław did not now risk a full return to the floods on the scale seen in the second week of July, when citizens managed to defend the historic centre but much of the city of 650,000 was submerged under more than a metre.

But the residential area of Zaciszewo already lay under water Thursday as workers rushed to repair a crucial sluice to prevent grover flooding when the new surge struck.

The Odra was far from the only source of danger and suffering — other smaller rivers were also inflicting local tragedies in south and west Poland where expanses of land were still submerged, delaying clean-up and reconstruction efforts.

On Thursday, 2,900 square kilometres lay under water out of a total 6,090 square kilometres affected during the disaster. It covered parts of 440 towns and villages, 59 of which were completely flooded.

The total death toll held steady at 55, although there was a likelihood that receding waters could throw up more victims.

Camera images from flooded areas showed people taking boats to feed stranded surviving farm animals, wearing masks to bury heaps of bloated pig carcasses or sitting hopelessly on smashed furniture that represented the lost efforts of a

lifetime. In Rybnik in Silesia, troops were gathering corpses washed out of a ravaged cemetery for reburial in a mass grave.

Where waters receded, sewage laden filth and a lack of clean drinking water threatened dysentery and food-poisoning.

Despite such horrors, weather forecasts gave grounds to hope the nearly three-week ordeal was approaching an end.

Mr. Sobczak said that although rain was falling on parts of Poland and was likely over the weekend, it would probably be scattered and not dangerous.

As the government rolled into action with a major reconstruction plan, the billions of dollars worth of damage raised anxieties over effects on Poland's finances.

The zloty currency slipped in Thursday trading and the Central Bank had to sell dollars to prop it up against what dealers said was speculative selling by Polish banks.

The opposition and the co-ruling Polish Peasant Party kept up calls for Sept. 21 general elections to be postponed, saying flooded areas were in no state to hold them.

But the ex-Communist Democratic Left Alliance (SLD), dominant party in the ruling coalition, opposed the idea and appeared able to block any delay in the polls with support from its ally

President Kwasniewski.

As for Frankfurt an der Oder, soldiers started evacuating thousands of people from their homes Friday after a second dyke burst overnight in the flood-hit Oder River area of eastern Germany.

Officials said about 3,000 people in the villages of Ziltendorf and Wiesnau would have to leave as a result of the breach, south of another dyke which burst Wednesday.

Further north in the Oderbruch area, fire sirens and church bells were sounded and local television broadcast messages warning residents in around 15 villages to prepare for evacuation after the foundations of a dyke were swept away by the river.

A spokesman for the regional authorities said evacuations were progressing slowly as some residents were reluctant to follow orders and leave their homes.

The new breach was now 75 metres wide and would probably open up to 200 metres as water rushed through, he said.

Water levels dropped further downstream at Frankfurt an der Oder after the breach relieved pressure.

But the situation was still critical in Ratzdorf, at the confluence of the Oder and Neisse rivers which form part of the border with Poland, the spokesman said.

## Foreign aid workers quit Kabul as Taliban leader said to escape

KABUL (AFP) — A convoy of 45 foreign aid workers left here Friday amid tensions in the city, as a senior Taliban leader thought to be held prisoner for 10 weeks was said by official radio to be free.

Former Foreign Minister Mullah Mohammad Ghaus was thought to have been held by forces opposed to the Islamic hardline militia. But an announcement by Taliban-run Radio Shariat said: "Thanks to the cooperation of the faithful people of the north Mullah Mohammad Ghaus, a member of the High Council of the Islamic movement was safely taken from Balkh to Kunduz."

At dawn Friday meanwhile about 45 expatriates left Kabul for the Pakistani border overland in a convoy of vehicles under escort of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC).

Neither the Red Cross nor the United Nations has yet ordered an evacuation of their foreign nationals from the beleaguered Afghan capital, with opposition forces reported to be only about 25

kilometres north of the city. On Wednesday there was a partial evacuation of foreign humanitarian aid workers when around 20 "non-essential" staff drove to Pakistan.

The news of Mr. Ghaus re-joining Islamic militia fighters in northern Kunduz came as a surprise as it contradicted earlier reports that he had been arrested by opposition troops amid fighting between the militia and anti-Taliban alliance forces in northern Mazar-i-Sharif in May.

How Mr. Ghaus was "safely taken" on the 170-kilometre journey from opposition-held Balkh province across the frontlines to neighbouring Taliban-controlled Kunduz province was unexplained.

Mr. Ghaus was reported arrested after the abortive defection by ethnic Uzbek General Abdul Malik in May.

Gen. Malik mutinied against his own warlord boss General Abdul Rashid Dostam to allow the Taliban into northern Afghanistan unopposed, but in a dis-

pute over power-sharing switched sides again to re-join the alliance.

Mr. Ghaus, Central Bank Governor Ehsanullah and chief military Commander Mullah Abdul Razaq were among an estimated 2,000 Taliban taken prisoner in the subsequent fighting.

The Taliban have been persistent in their demands for the release of these northern-held prisoners — and the success of peace negotiations hinges on the issue.

Mullah Mohammad Omar, the supreme leader of the Taliban movement, has been quoted in the Pakistan press as saying "there can be no talks or a ceasefire" with the opposition until "our men are freed."

Meaningful Afghan peace talks were put on the back-burner a week ago when opposition Commander Ahmad Shah Masood launched a lightning offensive against the Muslim militants and drove them back 40 kilometres.

There was no overnight change reported in the current frontlines Friday, which are close to the vil-

lage Hossein Kot about 25 kilometres north of Kabul on the so-called old road.

The city was tense but calm Friday morning with no jet strikes or rocket attacks.

On Thursday in a daring daylight raid an opposition jet made a direct bomb hit on an important downtown Taliban billet, the former Hotel Ariana.

The foreign aid community has reacted to the escalation of fighting and uncertain security in Kabul by ordering an evacuation of all staff except those engaged in the medical and health sectors.

"It has been decided that all non-medical staff are strongly recommended to leave Kabul Friday," declared Ross Everson, Kabul chief of the Agency Coordinating Body for Afghan Relief (ACBAR).

Due to vulnerability of Kabul Airport to incoming rocket fire all ICRC and U.N. flights have been suspended, but Taliban air-force jets were still active, witnesses said.

## Irish president retires in September to take up U.N. post

UNITED NATIONS (R) — Ireland's President Mary Robinson announced Thursday she would step down as head of state on Sept. 12, nearly three months before the end of her term, to take up her new post as the top U.N. human rights official.

"I will retire from the presidency of Ireland on September 12 at 1 p.m.," she told reporters, with Secretary-General Kofi Annan standing beside her.

Mrs. Robinson was approved by the U.N. General Assembly on June 17 as the next U.N. High Commissioner for Human Rights.

But the date for the start of her four-year term in the Geneva-based post was left open.

Mr. Annan has been anxious for her to take over before the beginning of the annual General Assembly session opening on Sept. 16.

Mrs. Robinson, 53, is a lawyer and human rights legal expert, as well as the first woman elected president of Ireland. Her seven-year term as head of state would normally end on Dec. 2.

"I have understood from the secretary-general that he has been very anxious to have me on board and to know the date when I would assume the post of high commissioner," she said.

"And I have indicated to him that I will retire from the presidency of Ireland on 12th of December, at 1 p.m. And I will then be in a position to take up the post," she said, mistaking the month.

After Mr. Annan whispered in her left ear, she quickly corrected herself, saying: "12th of September, at 1 o'clock. And I would hope then to go to Geneva and then to come to New York in time for the General Assembly's 52nd session," she added.

In introducing Mrs. Robinson, Mr. Annan said: "We are excited to have her on board. We think she is going to be a wonderful addition to the team. I was going to use the word 'superstar' but I didn't want to embarrass her."

Mrs. Robinson thanked Mr. Annan and said she was honoured to have been nominated by him and approved by the General Assembly.

She said it was a daunting task but a very important one.

## Ex-warlord Taylor is Liberia's new president

MONROVIA (R) — Former warlord Charles Taylor won a landslide victory in Liberia's presidential election, according to results announced Thursday, achieving through the ballot box what he failed to get through the barrel of a gun.

Thousands of Liberians thronged the streets and cheered as Election Commission Chairman Henry Andrews announced that Mr. Taylor, who launched Liberia's civil war in 1989, had won Saturday's election with 75.3 per cent of the vote.

Mr. Taylor, 49, wearing his trademark cream safari suit and smiling broadly, was in the hall to hear the news.

Former senior U.N. official Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf was runner-up with just under 9.6 per cent, Mr. Andrews told a packed hall in Monrovia, capital of the West African republic founded by freed American slaves in 1847.

Twelve candidates took part. Mr. Andrews said results of parallel polling for a 26-member senate and a 64-seat house of representatives would be announced in a few days. Turnout approached 90 per cent.

Defeated candidates con-

sidered over to congratulate Mr. Taylor but neither Ms. Johnson-Sirleaf nor Mr. Taylor's fellow former warlord Alhaji Kromah attended the ceremony. The third former warlord in the field, George Boley, was present.

Liberia, Africa's first independent republic, celebrates its 150th birthday Saturday.

The elections were the climax of a peace process brokered by its west African neighbours to end a war that has killed well over 150,000 people.

Before the formal announcement of the outcome, widely expected given the pattern of previous results, Mr. Taylor extended an olive branch to his rivals.

He told BBC Radio he was ready to offer jobs to some of them but he specifically mentioned Ms. Johnson-Sirleaf, 58, the only woman in the race for the presidency.

"I will offer some of them senior positions and others junior positions. We must go together," Mr. Taylor said. "I intend to use the talents of most of the fellows that I have respect for, including Ellen."

Four rival candidates earlier conceded defeat.

Ms. Johnson-Sirleaf, Mr. Kromah and Mr. Boley alleged polling day irregularities. None has rejected the election, declared free and fair by more than 500 international observers and over 1,000 local monitors.

Mr. Andrews appealed for respect for the result.

"Liberia is bigger, greater and grander than all of us," he said. "If we truly love our country ... we will at this moment take a cue from the ordinary man in the street."

A Nigerian-led West African peacekeeping force disarmed many of the nation's militia fighters and ensured security during polling. Mr. Taylor has said he would like to stay on for 12 to 18 months.

Nigeria's Foreign Minister Tom Ikimi and the commander of the peacekeepers, General Victor Malu, attended the announcement. A brass band from the armed forces of Liberia, the former national army that became just another militia, played.

The war wrecked Liberia's iron ore, rubber, timber and diamond-based economy. It drove as many as half the pre-war population of 2.5 million people from their homes.

## Opposition stronghold held by Cambodian forces

PHNOM PENH (AFP) — Forces loyal to Cambodia's strongarm leader Hun Sen were Friday firmly in control of a key northern town which had been the stronghold of rival royalist forces, officials and witnesses said.

The town of Samrong has been the object of intense speculation and conflicting reports for the past few days as each side in the factional conflict has claimed the dusty hamlet was in their hands. Adding to the confusion, the town, about 25 kilometres south of the Thai border, has changed hands between the opposing troops "at least" three times in the past week, military analysts who were in the area said.

"We are in control of Samrong and there is no fighting near the town," Secretary of State for Information Khieu Kanharith told AFP. "There has been no change in recent days and our outposts are five kilometres north of the town," he said.

An independent source just returned from the area said that as of late Thursday, Mr. Hun Sen's Cambodian People's Party (CPP) forces were firmly entrenched in Samrong.

"Hun Sen's men were very much present in the town and seemed to be in control in the area by a long way," a traveller who visited the area said.

"It has changed hands several times, but for the past few days the CPP,

which as by far the stronger force, have been holding Samrong."

The latest remarks came just hours after Nhiek Bun Chhay, the deputy chief of staff of ousted First Prime Minister Prince Norodom Ranariddh reemerged from hiding, defiant about the prospects for the royalist resistance.

The former top soldier claimed in a town on the border with Thailand that royalist forces were in control of Samrong and that the "resistance" would use it as "a base to counter-attack." Prince Ranariddh's royalist forces retreated more than 60 kilometres from the northern town of Siem Reap to Samrong earlier this month, offering little real resistance to the advancing CPP troops.

The outnumbered and out-gunned forces of the vanquished prince did not appear to have the will to fight following the ouster of the first premier in a weekend of factional fighting in Phnom Penh on July 5 and 6, observers have said.

Mr. Khieu Kanharith also clarified remarks he made late Thursday, when he said Gen. Nhiek Bun Chhay was in or near Phnom Penh and negotiating by telephone to go into exile while declaring his "retirement" from fighting and politics.

"There was some confusion about the phone calls and it was mistakenly believed Nhiek Bun Chhay was speaking from here," he

said. "What is certain is that he has lied about wanting to give up fighting. I just don't want to see any more conflict," he added.

Gen. Nhiek Bun Chhay, a loyal supporter of Prince Ranariddh, escaped from Phnom Penh after the earlier factional violence and had been in hiding until his reappearance Friday.

Meanwhile, U.S. envoy to Cambodia Stephen Solarz said Friday Washington wanted exiled Cambodians to be free to go home to take part in elections but strongman Hun Sen said ousted Prince Ranariddh must face trial if he returns.

Mr. Solarz said more than three hours of talks with Mr. Hun Sen Friday had been frank. But he declined to answer reporters' questions, saying he had to report to U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright in Kuala Lumpur first.

"I've just had a very frank and in some respects very constructive discussion with the second prime minister," Mr. Solarz said in a brief statement.

"The United States very much wants the situation to be resolved in a manner which is compatible with the principles of the Paris peace accords, which would make it possible for those in exile to return and which would pave the road for genuinely free and fair elections," he said.

In his talks with Mr. Solarz, Mr. Hun Sen repeat-

ed that Prince Ranariddh could return but he must face trial for his alleged crimes if he came back, a Hun Sen aide said.

"He agrees to Ranariddh's returning. He just said Ranariddh has to deal with the courts," Mr. Hun Sen's aide Prak Sokhonn told reporters. "If he is found not guilty he would be allowed to sit and work with him (Mr. Hun Sen) again."

Mr. Prak Sokhonn said Mr. Solarz and Mr. Hun Sen had agreed that exiled politicians should be able to return, that Cambodia's next elections should be held on May 23 as planned and the poll should be free and fair.

Mr. Solarz, in an apparent reference to proposed mediation efforts by the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN), said he hoped other parties could get involved in dialogue on Cambodia.

"I hope the constructive dialogue and discussion that I had with the second prime minister can be extended to include all of the relevant and interested parties," Mr. Solarz said.

Mr. Hun Sen has said he wants Foreign Minister Ung Huot to replace Prince Ranariddh.

On Friday, Mr. Solarz indicated the United States might support a replacement for Prince Ranariddh if the new first prime minister was chosen in an appropriate manner by the National Assembly, Mr. Prak Sokhonn said.

## South Korean by-election augurs well for ruling party

SEOUL (R) — South Korean voters banded a thumping victory to the ruling party in a parliamentary by-election which analysts Friday described as a warning to the opposition ahead of presidential polls.

Thursday's election in the central town of Yesan, a stronghold of opposition presidential candidate Kim Jong-Pil, resulted in defeat for a candidate backed by the two opposition parties and was seen as a blow to the opposition's strategy of fielding a single candidate in December's presidential vote.

"The outcome is a blow to an opposition plan to cooperate in the presidential election," said the leading daily Dong-A Ilbo.

The Central Election Management Committee announced Friday that candidate Oh Jang-Sup of the ruling New Korea Party won a parliamentary seat with 26,608 votes against 23,312 for Cho Jong-Souk of Kim Jong-Pil's United Liberal Democrats.

To demonstrate the opposition's alliance, the largest opposition party, the National Congress for New Politics, did not field a candidate in Yesan and cam-

paigned for Mr. Cho. "This highlights the weakness of the two opposition parties' alliance against the ruling party," said Choi Jang-Jip, political science professor at Korea University.

The two opposition parties have been negotiating in recent months to field a single candidate to improve their chances in December, although both Kim Jong-Pil and Kim Dae-Jung, National Congress leader, have been nominated as their torchbearers.

The Yesan poll was also the first chance for voters to pass judgement on the ruling party's choice Monday of ex-Supreme Court Judge Lee Hoi-Chang as its presidential candidate.

Mr. Lee led the ruling party's campaign in Yesan, pointing out that he is from the central Chungcheong province surrounding the town. Home-town loyalties and parochialism play decisive roles in South Korean elections.

"This is a turning point for Lee Hoi-Chang to win in a stronghold for the United Liberal Democrats," said Moon Chung-In, who lectures on politics at Yonsei University in Seoul.

"The ruling party's victory shows Lee now has the support of the region," he said.

Mr. Cho had won in the same constituency in general elections last year but the election committee ordered a fresh poll after his campaign manager was jailed for election law violations.

In another by-election Thursday, independent Park Tae-Joon, a former ruling party elder, won the vacant National Assembly seat representing the industrial town of Pohang.

The victory for Mr. Park, who quit the ruling party over policy differences with President Kim Young-Sam, was widely expected, but it again underscored the weakness of the opposition.

Mr. Park ran against Lee Ki-Taek, a former leader of the main opposition who now heads a splinter grouping, the Democratic Party. Mr. Park captured 77,884 votes against Mr. Lee's 35,137, while political novice Lee Byung-Suk, who ran for the ruling party, got 17,801 votes.

Political analysts noted that no opposition party candidate has ever won a presidential race.







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## Nabulsi: Jordan now focusing on social dimension adversely affected by restructuring policy

AMMAN (Petra) — Mohammad Said Nabulsi, the former governor of the Central Bank of Jordan (CBJ), said in a lecture to the Amman Rotary Club that the economic restructuring programme agreed between Jordan and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) has achieved good and positive results for the Kingdom.

But he indicated that this programme has left a trail of adverse economic and social consequences which the government is now trying to address through policies mainly focusing on the social dimension like combating poverty and unemployment.

Dr. Nabulsi said the restructuring programme succeeded in helping Jordan achieve good progress, especially in reducing the deficit in the fiscal budget from 20 per cent at the start of the

programme to five per cent at present.

This programme, he added, has also succeeded in addressing the Kingdom's balance of payments by reducing the deficit from 17 per cent to less than four per cent, cutting inflation from 20 per cent to four per cent and lowering the Kingdom's foreign debts from \$8.5 billion in 1989 to \$6.5 billion at present noting that the government is still doing its best to reduce the debts.

Jordan has been able through the restructuring programme to rebuild its foreign currency reserves, which have now topped the billion dollar mark and to keep steady the exchange rate of the Jordanian dinar, Dr. Nabulsi added.

But he said that despite the successes, the Jordanians now complain of recession in addition to increasing rates of poverty, something which the government has to exert strenuous pressures to address, noting that the government has adopted the social security package plan to help deal with the situation.

Dr. Nabulsi called on the government to give due attention to the Iraqi market, especially now that Iraq's other neighbours are opening their borders with Iraq. He also urged the government to pave the ground for more investments in the Kingdom.

Dr. Nabulsi said Jordan is in need of a national policy for rehabilitating the poor and taking care of the children and the disabled and must expand its privatisation policy and reduce public expenditure in order to save funds for the social safety package.

## Oman eases taxes to lure foreign capital

ABU DHABI (AFP) — The Gulf state of Oman has introduced fresh reforms in its taxation system to attract foreign capital which it sees as vital for economic growth away from oil, officials said Friday.

Sultan Qaboos, the country's supreme leader, this week approved the reforms to give foreigners more tax exemptions, just a few months after the government decided to push local companies to woo foreign investment.

"We hope the latest reforms will usher in a new stage of attracting foreign investment," Omani National Economy Minister Ahmad Ibn Abdul Nabi Makki, told the United Arab Emirates daily Al Itihad.

"Foreign investments are the ideal instrument for stimulating the national economy and eventually improving the living standards of the citizens."

Under the new rules, joint-stock companies which have a foreign ownership of more than 90 per cent will be subject to a tax of five to 50 per cent. Few companies here have such a high percentage of foreign ownership.

Previously companies with foreign ownership of 65 per cent were subject to the higher tax levels.

Companies in which foreign shareholding is below 90 per cent will now be treated as Omani institutions, which are required to pay only between five and 7.5 per cent in taxes, according to the new law.

Makki said the reforms also included permitting Omani banks and companies with capital of more than two million Omani riyals (\$5.2 million) to set up investment portfolios for foreigners for the first time, with a maximum 49 per cent of capital in shares.

Oman, which is not a member of the Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries, produces around 900,000 barrels per day of oil, providing more than two thirds of its income.

But it hopes the reforms will provide other sources of income, mainly farming and industry.

## Russian economy at turning point, prime minister says

MOSCOW (R) — Russia's economy, at last showing signs of recovery, is at a turning point and poised for growth, Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin said Thursday.

But in a survey of economic performance this year made to the cabinet, he said the authorities still had to untangle a web of unpaid bills between companies and the state which were holding back growth and undermining fiscal policy.

"We're on the point of a breakthrough. We can raise up the Russian economy and make it competitive and respected throughout the world. But it could work out differently," he said.

Since President Boris Yeltsin installed a new reformist cabinet in March, Mr. Chernomyrdin said, pension arrears had been paid, inflation had fallen, interest rates were down, capital was flowing into the country and structural reforms were underway.

Government forecasts at the meeting assume industrial output over the year as a whole would not rise and could fall up to two per cent. But Mr. Chernomyrdin said output had risen in the first half, and in June was two per cent higher than a year earlier.

"This year we note increased business activity in most sectors in industry," he said.

The recovery was also having a positive social effect, fostering the growth of a middle class, he said, pointing to increased ownership of consumer durables such as video players, washing machines and cars, which was spurring Russian output.

But some companies were still technically backward and inefficiently run, and in a state of financial collapse.

The amount of unpaid bills in the economy had nearly doubled to 27 per cent of gross domestic product over the first half of the year. Company profits in real terms were 2-1/2 times lower than a

year ago and companies had no working capital, he said.

Government revenues in the first half of the year were only 64 per cent of budgeted levels, forcing the government to slash spending to 68 per cent of budgeted levels. But tax income in the second quarter had jumped to 87 per cent from 58 per cent in the first.

The government was on course to pay 20 trillion roubles of wage arrears by the end of the year, Mr. Chernomyrdin said.

The government was working vigorously to improve cash flow in the economy by drawing up programmes to restructure debts, he said.

Russia's biggest tax debtors are being forced to choose between bankruptcy and a restructuring programme in which they transfer asset-backed bonds or majority equity stakes to the government in trust while they pay off their taxes, he noted.

## REUTERS

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### The Business of Information

#### Major Currencies & Cross Rates

Currency	US Dollar	DE Mark	GB Sterling	CHF Franc	JP Yen	CA Dollar	IT Lira	NL Guilder	FR Franc
US Dollar	1.0000	1.5341	0.6010	1.5128	116.72	1.3646	178.80	2.0660	6.1832
DE Mark	0.6522	1.0000	0.3536	0.6563	7.3633	0.7363	9.3633	10.3633	31.1363
GB Sterling	1.6640	2.8580	1.0000	2.8172	193.35	2.5940	287.30	3.4380	10.2882
CHF Franc	0.6510	1.5115	0.3536	1.0000	7.3633	0.7363	9.3633	10.3633	31.1363
JP Yen	0.0086	1.3700	0.0034	1.3280	1.0000	0.7363	9.3633	10.3633	31.1363
CA Dollar	0.7222	1.3239	0.4221	1.2821	1.36	1.0000	12.29	17.68	52.298
IT Lira	0.0005	1.0280	0.0003	0.0047	153.37	0.7748	1.0000	11.36	3.4891
NL Guilder	0.4840	0.1775	0.2396	0.1522	36.36	0.0690	0.0846	1.0000	3.7603
FR Franc	0.1617	0.2965	0.0971	0.24670	18.36	0.2238	33.38	33.9900	1.0000

#### Middle Eastern Currencies

Currency	US Dollar	DE Mark	GB Sterling	CHF Franc	JP Yen	CA Dollar	IT Lira	NL Guilder	FR Franc
US Dollar	1.0000	1.5341	0.6010	1.5128	116.72	1.3646	178.80	2.0660	6.1832
Jordan Dinar	1.4104	2.1700	0.3700	2.1700	163.35	2.5940	287.30	3.4380	10.2882
Saudi Riyal	0.2668	0.4080	0.1000	0.37	0.0010	0.36	418.38	0.0007	0.0007
Bahrain Dinar	2.85	4.3485	1.0000	4.3485	33.36	4.3485	51.36	0.0007	0.0007
Qatar Dinar	0.2748	0.4148	1.0000	0.4148	0.0034	0.4148	5.136	0.0007	0.0007
Kuwait Dinar	3.2922	5.0039	1.2980	5.0039	39.36	5.0039	59.36	0.0007	0.0007
Emirates Dinar	0.2724	0.4132	1.0218	0.4132	0.0034	0.4132	5.136	0.0007	0.0007
Lebanese P1000	0.85	1.2807	0.2485	1.2807	10.36	1.2807	15.36	0.0007	0.0007
Egyptian	0.2947	0.4380	1.1053	0.4380	3.36	0.4380	5.36	0.0007	0.0007

#### Energy

Energy	US Dollar	DE Mark	GB Sterling	CHF Franc	JP Yen	CA Dollar	IT Lira	NL Guilder	FR Franc
Brent	19.35	29.11	10.35	29.11	223.35	36.46	453.80	52.298	153.35
WTI	19.35	29.11	10.35	29.11	223.35	36.46	453.80	52.298	153.35
Bonny	19.35	29.11	10.35	29.11	223.35	36.46	453.80	52.298	153.35
Dubai	19.35	29.11	10.35	29.11	223.35	36.46	453.80	52.298	153.35
UL Gas	194.00	292.00	100.00	292.00	2233.50	364.60	4538.00	522.98	1533.50

#### Mid-East Currencies

Currency	US Dollar	DE Mark	GB Sterling	CHF Franc	JP Yen	CA Dollar	IT Lira	NL Guilder	FR Franc
US Dollar	1.0000	1.5341	0.6010	1.5128	116.72	1.3646	178.80	2.0660	6.1832
SA Riyal	0.2668	0.4080	0.1000	0.37	0.0010	0.36	418.38	0.0007	0.0007
AE Dirham	0.2724	0.4132	1.0218	0.4132	0.0034	0.4132	5.136	0.0007	0.0007
KW Dinar	3.2922	5.0039	1.2980	5.0039	39.36	5.0039	59.36	0.0007	0.0007
EH Dinar	0.2724	0.4132	1.0218	0.4132	0.0034	0.4132	5.136	0.0007	0.0007
CY Pound	1.8883	2.8583	0.7363	2.8583	22.36	2.8583	34.36	0.0007	0.0007

#### Metal Prices

Metal	US Dollar	DE Mark	GB Sterling	CHF Franc	JP Yen	CA Dollar	IT Lira	NL Guilder	FR Franc
Gold (oz)	323.9	495.4	183.5	495.4	3833.5	624.6	7788.0	906.0	2783.5
Silver (oz)	4.35	6.55	2.40	6.55	50.35	8.16	100.80	11.76	35.35
Platinum (oz)	422.5	638.5	233.5	638.5	4933.5	798.6	9988.0	1168.0	3533.5
70 (3 Months)	1657	2500	900	2500	19335	3096	38360	4488	13335
CU (3 Months)	2361	3545	1285	3545	27335	4396	54360	6336	19335
Zinc (3 Months)	1623	2435	885	2435	18835	3006	37360	4388	13335
Lead (3 Months)	852	1275	465	1275	9835	1596	19860	2336	7335
Ni (3 Months)	7180	10770	3935	10770	83335	13396	166360	19336	58335

#### Currency Deposit Rates (Bid)

Currency	US Dollar	DE Mark	GB Sterling	CHF Franc	JP Yen	CA Dollar	IT Lira	NL Guilder	FR Franc
US Dollar	5.52	8.71	3.28	8.71	68.36	11.16	138.80	15.76	47.36
DE Mark	8.71	10.00	3.53	10.00	78.36	12.66	158.80	18.26	53.36
GB Sterling	3.28	3.53	1.00	3.53	27.36	4.36	53.80	6.26	18.36
CHF Franc	8.71	10.00	3.53	10.00	78.36	12.66	158.80	18.26	53.36
JP Yen	68.36	78.36	27.36	78.36	613.36	98.66	1233.60	143.66	433.36
CA Dollar	11.16	12.66	4.36	12.66	88.66	14.16	173.60	19.66	58.66
IT Lira	138.80	158.80	53.80	158.80	1083.60	173.60	2133.60	243.60	733.60
NL Guilder	15.76	18.26	6.26	18.26	123.60	20.66	253.60	29.66	88.66
FR Franc	47.36	53.36	18.36	53.36	363.60	58.66	733.60	83.66	243.60

#### Main Equity Indices

Index	US Dollar	DE Mark	GB Sterling	CHF Franc	JP Yen	CA Dollar	IT Lira	NL Guilder	FR Franc
New York	8101.13	12333.5	4433.5	12333.5	96333.5	15333.5	18833.5	2133.5	6333.5
DOW JONES	8101.13	12333.5	4433.5	12333.5	96333.5	15333.5	18833.5	2133.5	6333.5
S&P 500	8101.13	12333.5	4433.5	12333.5	96333.5	15333.5	18833.5	2133.5	6333.5
FT-SE 100	4851.5	7275.5	2533.5	7275.5	56333.5	9333.5	11333.5	1233.5	3633.5
Nikkei 225	20333.5	30333.5	10333.5	30333.5	238333.5	38333.5	46333.5	5333.5	15333.5
CAC 40	3025.94	4533.5	1533.5	4533.5	35333.5	5833.5	7133.5	833.5	2433.5
DAX	4317.54	6433.5	2133.5	6433.5	51333.5	8333.5	10333.5	1133.5	3333.5

#### Energy

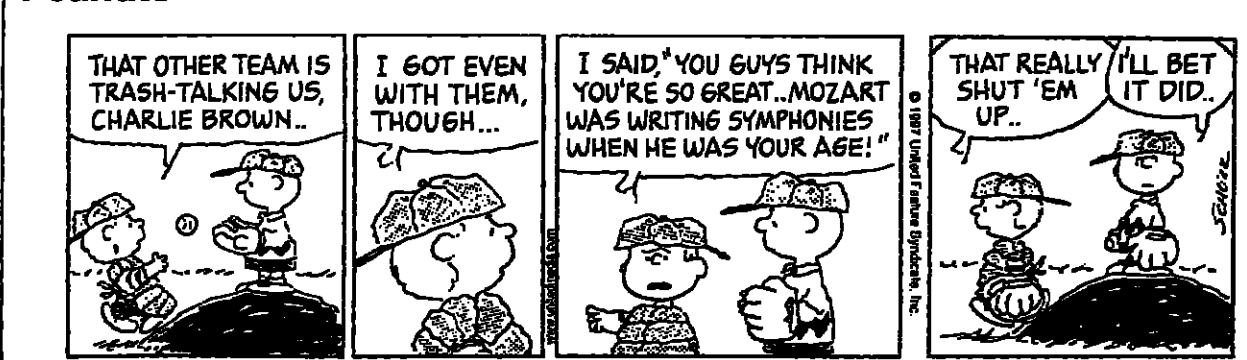
Energy	US Dollar	DE Mark	GB Sterling	CHF Franc	JP Yen	CA Dollar	IT Lira	NL Guilder	FR Franc
Coffee (c/lb)	193.83	291.1	103.5	291.1	2233.5	364.6	453.80	52.298	153.35
Cocoa (5/ton)	1538	2300	800	2300	18335	2986	36360	4288	12335
Sugar (5/ton)	342.5	514.5	183.5	514.5	3933.5	624.6	7788.0	906.0	2783.5
Wheat (5/ton)	742	1114	393.5	1114	8633.5	1396	17360	1936	5833.5
Soya (c/lb)	21.44	32.16	11.35	32.16	253.35	40.66	50.36	5.86	17.36
Tee (5/ton)	137	205.5	73.5	205.5	1633.5	264.6	3288.0	386.0	1133.5
Barley (5/ton)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Rice (5/ton)	480	714	240	714	5633.5	9333.5	11333.5	1233.5	3633.5

#### JOD Cross Rates

Currency	US Dollar	DE Mark	GB Sterling	CHF Franc	JP Yen	CA Dollar	IT Lira	NL Guilder	FR Franc
US Dollar	1.0000	1.5341	0.6010	1.5128	116.72	1.3646	178.80	2.0660	6.1832
GB Sterling	0.6522	1.0000	0.3536	0.6563	7.3633	0.7363	9.3633	10.3633	31.1363
DE Mark	0.6510	1.5115	0.3536	1.0000	7.3633	0.7363	9.3633	10.3633	31.1363
CHF Franc	0.6510	1.5115	0.3536	1.0000	7.3633	0.7363	9.3633	10.3633	31.1363
JP Yen	0.0086	1.3700	0.0034	1.3280	1.0000	0.7363	9.3633	10.3633	31.1363
CA Dollar	0.7222	1.3239	0.4221	1.2821	1.36	1.0000	12.29	17.68	52.298
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NL Guilder	0.4840	0.1775	0.2396	0.1522	36.36	0.0690	0.0846	1.0000	3.7603
FR Franc	0.1617	0.2965	0.0971	0.24670	18.36	0.2238	33.38	33.9900	1.0000

\* Source: Central Bank of Jordan

## Peanuts



## Andy Capp



## Mutt'n'Jeff



## ASEAN central banks sign currency swap agreement

SHANGHAI (AFP) — Central banks from five members of the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) signed a document here Friday extending an existing currency swap agreement, an official said.

The accord was signed by governors of the central banks of Malaysia, Singapore, the Philippines, Thailand and Indonesia, all of which have seen their currencies hammered by speculators this month.

A statement from the meeting said the agreement was established Aug. 5, 1977 as a mechanism "for short-term liquidity financing to alleviate temporary balance of payments needs of member countries."

Under the deal, "a member country with liquidity need can exchange its currency for U.S. dollars provided by other member countries in accordance with an agreed procedure," it said.

The deal renewed the swap arrangement for one year with effect from Aug. 5 when the current is due to expire.

The signing took place on the sidelines of a meeting here of 11 East Asian and Pacific central bankers, which has largely focused on the currency storm currently sweeping through South East Asia. Australia, China, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, New Zealand, the Philippines, Singapore, South Korea and Thailand are grouped together in the Executive Meetings of East Asia and Pacific (EMEAP) central banks forum, a Japanese initiative launched in 1991.

Chen Yuan, the deputy governor of the People's Bank of China, told a news conference that the swap agreement was an arrangement between ASEAN members that "so far is nothing to do with EMEAP members."

"We regard as a positive step this arrangement the ASEAN countries have made in an effort to stabilise their currencies," he added.

The statement added that the extension of the swap arrangement was consistent with the ASEAN finance minister's decision in Phuket, Thailand, earlier this year to conduct a review of the mechanism, taking into consideration the bilateral and multilateral arrangements to which ASEAN members are signatories.

It said the successful implementation and renewal of the ASEAN swap arrangement over the last 20 years testified to the continuing spirit of ASEAN cooperation with monetary and banking matters.

"ASEAN members remain committed to regional cooperation in this area and are actively exploring means of enhancing existing arrangements," the statement said.

H.M. Lee, the assistant to Bank of Korea Governor Lee Kyung-Shik, said there was no broad agreement on intervention within the members of EMEAP and that Korea did not pledge to help.

### Daily Beat

#### Jordan Chemical Industries Company distributing dividends at the rate of 20%

\*\* THE JORDAN Chemical Industries achieved a JD685,000 operational profit last year compared to JD692,000 in 1995. After taking into account administrative, selling and general expenses as well as depreciation, the company posted a JD399,000 net profit, or 29 per cent of the capital, compared to JD435,000 registered in 1995. By adding JD95,955 of retained earnings, the total profit amounted to JD495,000 which the general assembly approved to be distributed as dividends to shareholders at the rate of 20 per cent.

Board Chairman Mohammad Taher told the shareholders that the company has completed most of the expansions at the plants needed to increase production. He said the company is working to develop the sections of packing and mixing to ensure good quality of products. Mr. Taher indicated that a study is being conducted to set up a production unit or a branch for the company in Palestine as the products of the firm have been well received in the self-rule areas.

Noting that exports have actually started since last December, Mr. Taher pointed out that exports have risen during the first quarter of 1997 and he expected sales in general to be higher this year (Al Dustour).

#### Jordan Central Holding Company returns to profitability

\*\* THE JORDAN Central Holding Company returned to profitability last year after posting a JD32,300 profit in 1996 compared to a JD275,200 loss recorded in 1995. According to the annual report, the company's 1996 sales amounted to JD3.8 million, 18.5 per cent higher than the sales during 1995. Wholesale accounted for 34 per cent of total sales whereas exports were around 15 per cent.

Board Chairman Subeila Maqdash said the company focused on internal operations and did not expand due to higher financing costs, slow investment activity and sharp drop in the liquidity of commercial enterprises.

She told the shareholders that the company last year renewed the franchise deal to continue using the trade mark of Van Heusen in the local market for another three years under better conditions and covering a wider variety of products. Negotiations to obtain the franchise of using the Total trade mark in the local market were also completed with the permission to export to authorised agents abroad.

The Jordan Clothing Company, owned by the Jordan Central Holding Company posted a JD163,100 net profit last year as it produced 672,800 pieces of light, cotton and other types of clothing and textile.

The total assets of the Central Holding Company stood at about JD5.5 million at the end of 1996 with shareholders' equity amounting to around JD3.7 million. Current liabilities dropped from JD2.48 million in 1995 to JD1.76 million at the end of 1996 (Al Aswaq).

**THE BETTER HALF** By Glasbergen

**JUMBLE** THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME by Hans Arnold and Mike Anglin

Unscramble these four Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

INHEW  
MAULB  
VENNIT  
APITOE

Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

Answer here: A " " OF " " (Answers tomorrow)

Yesterday's Jumbles: RABBI TAFFY THRESH LEDGER  
Answer: When the turkey was done hours before dinner it became this — THE EARLY BIRD

### ASIAN FINANCIAL MARKETS

HOUSTON BASE CENTER ASIAN SECURITIES  
TELEPHONE: 407171 / 607172  
ORGANIZED MARKET TRADING ACTIVITY FOR THE PERIOD (19/07/1997 - 23/07/1997)  
WEEKLY REPORT

DATE	LAST	COMPANY NAME	P/E	DIV	NO. OF CONTRACTS	NO. OF SHARES	VALUE TRADED	OPENING PRICE	HIGH	LOW	CLOSING PRICE	CHANGE	AVERAGE PRICE	TURNOVER	NO. OF TRADING DAYS
19/07	20/07	21/07	22/07	23/07											
200.000	252.000	ARAB BANK	13.3	1.34	193	3920	1738797	286.00	298.00	285.00	289.50	+ 3.50	293.716	.135	5
2.110	2.020	JOR. NATIONAL BK.	11.8	0.00	206	186012	393234	2.08	2.14	2.07	2.08	-	2.124	.443	5
5.000	5.050	CAIRO ARAB BANK	11.8	7.43	2	1350	7695	5.75	5.78	5.70	5.70	-	5.700	.014	2
3.300	3.110	BANK OF JORDAN	8.6	0.00	4	9000	20340	3.20	3.25	3.15	3.15	-	3.151	.084	1
2.900	2.910	KID. EAST INV. BK.	61.1	0.00	20	17100	16079	.92	.95	.92	.93	-	.940	.171	4
2.200	2.100	INDUSTRIAL INV. BK.	8.2	7.05	28	9981	21970	2.10	2.21	2.19	2.21	+ .03	2.202	.092	4
5.100	4.900	THE MIDDLE EAST	14.6	2.96	22	10029	88214	4.91	4.91	4.85	4.90	-	4.899	.072	5
4.000	2.710	JOR. INVEST. BANK	10.2	0.00	19	6104	17301	2.81	2.87	2.75	2.87	+ .06	2.833	.061	5
1.000	7.60	JOR. GULF BANK	4.4	8.97	35	48818	28104	.77	.77	.77	.78	+ .01	.781	.244	5
3.510	3.510	ARAB JOR. INV. BK.	17.3	0.00	2	4750	13100	3.51	3.60	3.60	3.60	+ .09	3.600	.048	2
3.070	3.200	JOR. ISLAMIC BANK	15.8	3.09	285	175581	687795	3.00	3.02	2.79	2.89	-	2.937	1.204	5
1.200	1.150	UNION BK. SAV. INV.	119.3	0.00	35	9238	12189	1.20	1.29	1.20	1.36	+ .16	1.219	.084	5
3.150	3.080	JOR. INV. FID. BANK	20.8	0.00	13	3628	11688	3.19	3.27	3.20	3.24	+ .05	3.232	.036	4
1.160	1.120	WETT. AL-HAL (NETRA)	.7	13.16	2	600	484	1.14	1.14	1.14	1.14	-	1.140	.030	2
1.000	.930	PHILADEL. INV. BK.	-	0.00	64	128818	128654	.93	.96	.95	.96	+ .03	.957	1.288	5

DATE	LAST	COMPANY NAME	P/E	DIV	NO. OF CONTRACTS	NO. OF SHARES	VALUE TRADED	OPENING PRICE	HIGH	LOW	CLOSING PRICE	CHANGE	AVERAGE PRICE	TURNOVER	NO. OF TRADING DAYS
19/07	20/07	21/07	22/07	23/07											
2.950	2.700	JORDAN TRUSTBANK	12.0	5.36	8	20032	78291	2.75	2.80	2.75	2.80	+ .05	2.793	.561	3
1.250	1.250	ABDULLAH KHAS INSUR.	9.0	0.00	2	1350	14592	1.25	1.28	1.24	1.24	-	1.253	.084	2
4.000	3.800	THOMSON INSUR.	10.9	5.00	1	1150	4500	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	-	4.000	.107	1
1.070	1.300	JOR. FINANCE INSUR.	4.5	12.50	16	17600	28134	1.59	1.60	1.59	1.60	+ .01	1.599	.800	4

DATE	LAST	COMPANY NAME	P/E	DIV	NO. OF CONTRACTS	NO. OF SHARES	VALUE TRADED	OPENING PRICE	HIGH	LOW	CLOSING PRICE	CHANGE	AVERAGE PRICE	TURNOVER	NO. OF TRADING DAYS
19/07	20/07	21/07	22/07	23/07											
1.470	1.470	JOR. ELECTRIC PWR.	8.0	6.04	42	28073	46547	1.45	1.47	1.45	1.45	-	1.458	.187	5
1.300	1.300	IRABD ELECTRICITY	8.2	0.33	1	50	49	1.30	1.30	1.30	1.38	-	1.380	.002	1
2.600	2.450	KHAYMA KINSHASA	14.7	5.55	1	300	843	2.60	2.81	2.81	2.81	+ .13	2.810	.258	1
5.200	5.000	ARAB INTL. HOTELS	15.4	4.00	8	10080	50280	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	-	4.998	.112	3
2.750	2.400	WHIPPITY LINE	16.0	0.00	2	6350	22943	2.75	2.75	2.75	2.75	-	2.750	.150	2
1.500	1.260	BATEL. PORTFOLIO	-	0.00	151	129550	190444	1.49	1.54	1.41	1.43	-	1.471	2.593	5
1.870	.850	REAL ESTATE INV.	12.1	6.90	5	920	800	.86	.87	.87	.87	+ .01	.870	.070	3
.500	.490	JORDAN INTL. TRAD.	26.2	0.00	3	3500	1778	.51	.51	.50	.51	-	.508	.103	2
1.410	1.200	KID. EAST INV. BK.	18.0	0.00	3	7500	2943	1.20	1.27	1.18	1.18	-	1.177	.049	1
3.050	2.400	JOR. INV. FID. BANK	7.7	0.00	17	11050	32745	2.97	3.18	2.95	2.95	-	2.965	.109	4
.970	.800	BATEL. PORTFOLIO	-	0.00	4	2150	3973	.82	.85	.84	.84	-	.840	.067	4
1.710	1.470	UNIFIED CO.	8.0	4.51	13	3800	6412	1.40	1.70	1.68	1.69	+ .01	1.687	.076	3

2.750	5.000	ARAB INT'L HOTELS	15.4	4.00	8	10080	50380	5.00	5.00	3.00	5.00	-	4.998	.112	3
1.200	2.600	ARABIAN LUMBER	16.0	4.73	2	8300	29943	2.75	2.75	2.75	2.75	-	2.750	.120	1
1.240	1.000	ARAB. PORTFOLIO	15.1	1295.69	190644	5.81	1.41	1.43	1.43	1.43	1.43	-	1.431	2.560	1
.875	.850	ARAB. INVEST. TRV.	12.1	6.30	5	820	800	.86	.87	.87	.87	+ .01	.870	.070	3
.520	.000	JORDAN INVL. TRAD.	16.2	0.00	3	3500	1778	.51	.51	.50	.51	-	.508	.103	3
1.410	1.200	KID. EAST HOTELS	18.0	0.00	3	7500	2943	1.20	1.18	1.17	1.18	-	1.177	.049	1
3.020	2.900	ARAB INVL. TRV. EDUC.	7.7	0.00	17	11050	32763	2.97	2.98	2.95	2.95	-	2.965	.109	1
.970	.930	RAMSA EDUCATION	-	0.00	6	2100	1973	.93	.95	.93	.94	+ .01	.940	.047	4
1.710	1.670	UNIFIED CO.	8.6	6.51	12	3800	6412	1.68	1.70	1.68	1.69	-	1.687	.076	3

# Jordan adds 4 more medals in karate, wrestling

Taekwondo team returns with 13 medals as equestrian, swimming teams falter

By Aileen Bannayan  
and JSYIF  
press committee

JORDAN'S KARATE team Friday won three bronze medals while Ismail Issa Al Sheikh added a silver medal in freestyle wrestling on the 13th day of the 8th Pan-Arab Games which conclude in Beirut July 27.

Al Sheikh took second place after losing to Syria's Mohammad Khanati who took the gold. Egypt's Ahmad Abdul Rahim took the bronze.

The karate medals came in the women's event by Nawal Bayyari, Azahir Zuhdi and Butheina Mahsir. The draw came in Jordan's favour with Bayyari and Zuhdi getting first round byes.

In wrestling, Jordan's Munir Sallaq lost to Egypt's Hisham Mustafa in the 58-kilogramme category and finished fourth. Teammate Abdul Hakim Abu Snehneh, who took a silver medal in Greco-Roman wrestling earlier in the week, also finished fourth after losing to Egypt's Walid Batawi.

Friday's four medals brought Jordan's medals tally up to 36, with 7 gold, 9 silver and 20 bronze.

Swimming results were far from competitive records again as Faris Naser finished seventh in the 200-metres breaststroke; Andre Khouri also finished seventh in the 200m butterfly; Hana Majaj came in fifth in the 100m butterfly; and in the 800m freestyle Rania Ghosheh came in eighth but registered a new Jordanian record while Hiba Nasser finished 11th.

In the equestrian team event, Jordan finished at a disappointing 7th place among 8 competing teams.

Sinan Nashashibi, Ra'ead Naser, Husam Bahou, and Hani Bisharat represented Jordan.

Lebanon took the gold, Saudi Arabia the silver and Libya the bronze.

The Kingdom's taekwondo team was one of the most impressive earning a total of 13 medals and making it the most successful Jordanian participation in the Pan-Arab Games to date.

His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan congratulated the taekwondo delegation on their admirable achievement.

In the women's event, Zaha Talhouini and Alisar Matar took golds for Jordan as Nancy Hindi took silver and Fatima Sayyad and Ahlam Bino bronze.

In the men's competition, Hussein Tahleh took gold, Raed Naji, Ali Asmar and Mohammad Abul Ruz silver and Shadi Abu Taleb, Daoud Matar, Ibrahim Agel and Mohammad Nawwaf bronze.

The boxing and athletics teams also secured 10 medals altogether.

The boxers won two gold medals by Mohammad Abu Khadijeh and Ayman Al Nadi and three bronze by Kamal Abdul Majid, Khalidoun Abdul Hameed and Basel Hindawi.

In athletics, Nada Kawar won a gold in the discus and a silver medal in the shot put; Fakhreddin Fuad added another gold in the high jump; Ala' Abdul Hadi won a bronze in the triple jump and Amal Maqari took another bronze in the women's marathon.

Ayed Khawaldeh became the first Jordanian to win three bronze weightlifting medals; Amer Natour took silver and bronze medals in

fencing and Mousa Khalaf took a silver for Jordan in judo.

Abdul Hakim Abu Snehneh took the silver medal in the 69-kilogramme Greco-Roman wrestling while in table tennis Iyad Maknay and Abdul Aziz Rida took the bronze in doubles and added another bronze in the team event.

In women's basketball, Jordan finished fourth after losing to Lebanon while the men came in 6th after losing 56-53.

In shooting, Khaled Naghaway was eliminated from the top six qualifying positions so were the rest of the Kingdom's swimmers. Hana Majaj took the only swimming bronze medal making up for otherwise disappointing results by her teammates.

Over 3,000 athletes are in Beirut for the largest gathering of Arab youth since the event was last held in Syria in 1992.

With Iraqi athletes barred from competition because of a boycott threat by Kuwait and Saudi Arabia, 19 countries are taking part in the Beirut Games with only Somalia and the Comoros missing the event.

Twenty events are being contested at the Games excluding kick-boxing, handball, gymnastics, bodybuilding, hockey, diving and water polo for technical and financial reasons.

The Kingdom's 187-strong delegation which includes 94 men and 33 women athletes competed in 14 of the 20 events. The delegation also includes 27 officials, 20 coaches and 13 referees.

Jordan dropped participation in cycling, tennis and volleyball, and will be competing in athletics, basket-

Schedule of events of Jordanian competitors at the 8th Pan-Arab Games for Saturday July 26, 1997

• Karate  
• Equestrian  
• Swimming  
Grand Prix  
100-metres freestyle  
(Rania Ghosheh, Hana Majaj)  
1500-metres freestyle (Yazan Khouri)  
400-metres medley (Hana Majaj)

Medals Table (excluding Friday's results)				
NATION	G	S	B	TOTAL
Egypt	82	43	26	151
Algeria	32	35	42	109
Morocco	18	13	17	48
Qatar	8	6	2	16
Jordan	7	8	17	32
Tunisia	7	7	20	34
Syria	6	22	27	55
Saudi Arabia	5	9	19	33
Lebanon	4	15	41	60
Kuwait	1	11	15	27
Oman	1	1	1	3
Sudan	0	1	2	3
Libya	0	1	1	2
Palestine	0	0	4	4
Bahrain	0	0	1	1

ball, karate, swimming, taekwondo, table tennis, boxing, equestrian, fencing, soccer, weightlifting, judo, freestyle and Greco-Roman wrestling and shooting. Other events at the Games include golf and yachting.

In line with international rules, drug testing was introduced for the first time since the Arab Games were launched in 1953. All gold medalists are being tested for performance-enhancing drugs, in addition to one other competitor selected in a draw in each event.

Lebanon is hosting the Arab World's premier sports event for the first time since the second Arab Games in 1957.

Jordan has received approval to host the 9th Pan-Arab Games in 2001. Kuwait was chosen as a substitute in case Jordan withdrew their bid.

Jordanian sports officials have underlined their support for organising and taking part in the Pan-Arab Games which have only been held seven times since 1953.

But the Games, designed to emphasise Arab brotherhood, were clouded by Lebanon's refusal to grant the Iraqi team entry visas for fear of provoking Kuwait and Saudi Arabia.

Jordan has taken part in all past seven Pan-Arab Games gaining a total of 49 medals (7 gold, 16 silver, 26 bronze).

Jordan finished 9th overall in the last Pan-Arab Games in 1992 with 1 gold, 6 silver and 6 bronze medals.

The Pan-Arab Games were held in Alexandria 1953, Beirut 1957, Casablanca 1961, Cairo 1965, Damascus 1976, Rabat 1985 and Damascus 1992.



Rania Alwani of Egypt competes in the women's 50-metre freestyle at the Pan Arab Games in the Bekaa Valley of Zahle. Alwani won the gold medal in a time of 27.14 seconds (Reuters photo)

## Jordan prepares for soccer final

By a Jordan Times  
Staff Reporter

JORDAN'S SOCCER team is preparing for the upcoming match against Syria in the final of the soccer event at the Pan-Arab Games which conclude in Beirut following Sunday's match.

The Kingdom's team had scored a landmark 3-2 over Kuwait to qualify for the final for the first time.

Syria beat Lebanon 3-2 in the other semi-final Thursday to qualify for the final.

His Majesty King Hussein and HRH Crown Prince Hassan congratulated the players on their historic achievement and urged them to continue their efforts in the upcoming match.

Jordanian who took to the streets following the match honking horns and waving the flags in celebration, now hope the team will continue its successful run and win the gold medal.

The players expressed their happiness at Syria reaching the final saying that had relieved the extra pressure of having to play the hosts.

It was, meanwhile, reported that Nabil Ayyad of Lebanon would probably officiate the match.

Following a practice session Friday, the team's head coach announced that players were free from injuries and looked forward to the final.

The Syrian coach Anwar Abdul Qader

told the press committee that he "had utmost respect for the Jordanian team."

"They displayed coherent teamwork and are moving the ball fast. That's what made them different from the rest of the team," he added.

"I hope both teams show sportsmanship. Let's leave the result is up to the circumstances of the match."

Jordan upset expectations as onlookers had nominated Kuwait — a team with an impressive record in Asia and a World Cup qualifier in 1982 — to advance to the final.

Kuwait now play Lebanon for 3rd and 4th places.

Lebanon's Abdul Fattah Shiyab heads the top scorers with 5 goals followed by Abdallah Shiyab of Jordan with 4 and Seif Bayazeed of Syria also with 4.

Eight countries took part in the soccer event. Group 1 included Jordan, Lebanon, Oman and Libya while Group 2 included Kuwait, the UAE, Syria and Mauritania.

Only the top two teams in each group qualified to the second round.

Jordan topped Group A and qualified to the second round after a 3-1 win over Oman. Lebanon joined them from Group A after beating Libya 2-1 and were joined by Syria and Kuwait from Group 2.

Jordan had scored 1-1 draws with Libya and Lebanon in the first round. The Kingdom's best result in past soccer competitions at the Games was fourth.

## Kingdom protests controversial rulings in taekwondo Jordan bids for Arab kick boxing, athletics championships Equestrian team hopeful in Grand Prix today

By Aileen Bannayan  
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AS THE 8th-Pan Arab Games near the end on Sunday, most of the Kingdom's athletes are back following the end of their respective competitions and the remaining ones hope to do well capping the most successful Jordanian participation in the history of the Pan-Arab Games with a total of 33 medals so far.

The head of Jordan's delegation Dr. Sari Hamdan, Friday asked to Minister of Culture and Youth Qassem Abu Ein to provide the delegation with another JD5,000 to cover extra expenses incurred by the delegation.

Meanwhile, as equestrian and karate teams resume competition today it was reported that the taekwondo delegation had objected to rulings by Korean referees, especially in the women's event.

Lama Haddad, who lost her taekwondo match in a controversial decision by the referee after she was leading 4-3. Friday was

awarded a complimentary sportsmanship medal by the Arab Taekwondo Federation.

The medal was the first awarded to any athlete at the Games and proved that the Korean referee had undoubtedly wronged Haddad in his decision.

Officials said the Kingdom's delegation will submit a tape-recording of the match to the international federation showing clearly that Haddad was the winner.

Jordan won a total of 13 medals in taekwondo including 3 golds, 4 silver and 6 bronze.

Egypt won first place in the team taekwondo event, followed by Morocco in second place and Jordan was third.

All eight athletes who took part in the event won medals — a first in the game's history in the Kingdom.

Three Jordanian referees also officiated the matches but declined to do so on the second day because of their objection to the rulings of the Korean referees who are coaches in Egypt.

EGYPT FRIDAY won the gold medal of the women's basketball event after defeating hosts Lebanon 73-44. Tunisia took silver after finishing second, Lebanon was third, Jordan fourth and Syria fifth. The Kingdom's team returned to Amman after beating Syria 56-53, while losing to Tunisia 52-41, to Lebanon 60-51, and Egypt 79-46.

Jordan bids for Arab events

The Arab Kick Boxing Federation has approved Jordan's bid to host the 1st Arab Kick Boxing Championship which is scheduled for September 1998.

Furthermore, Ministry of Culture and Youth Secretary Thougan Obeidat discussed with Suleiman Al Zaidi, the president of the Arab Athletics Federation, the possibility of Amman hosting the 8th Arab Athletics Championship next year.

Egypt wins record 82 gold medals

Egypt grabbed 11 gold medals Thursday, raising their haul so far to a record 82, the best performance by any country since the Games began in

1953.

Egypt surpassed its own record of 77 golds that it bagged at the inaugural Arab Games in Alexandria, Egypt. The closest that any country came was Syria, which took 73 golds in the 1976 Games in Damascus.

Algeria is second in the medal standing with 32 golds. Morocco is third with 18 golds.

But the most keenly contested event of the Games was the Lebanon-Syria soccer semifinal Thursday. Syria won 3-2 when sudden death was applied in extra-time after the two sides were level 2-2.

Syria will now clash with Jordan in the final (see separate story).

Saudi Arabia reached the final of the men's basketball after defeating the United Arab Emirates 79-64. They will meet Syria, who defeated Lebanon 69-59 in the other semifinal

Thursday.

Equestrian Grand Prix today

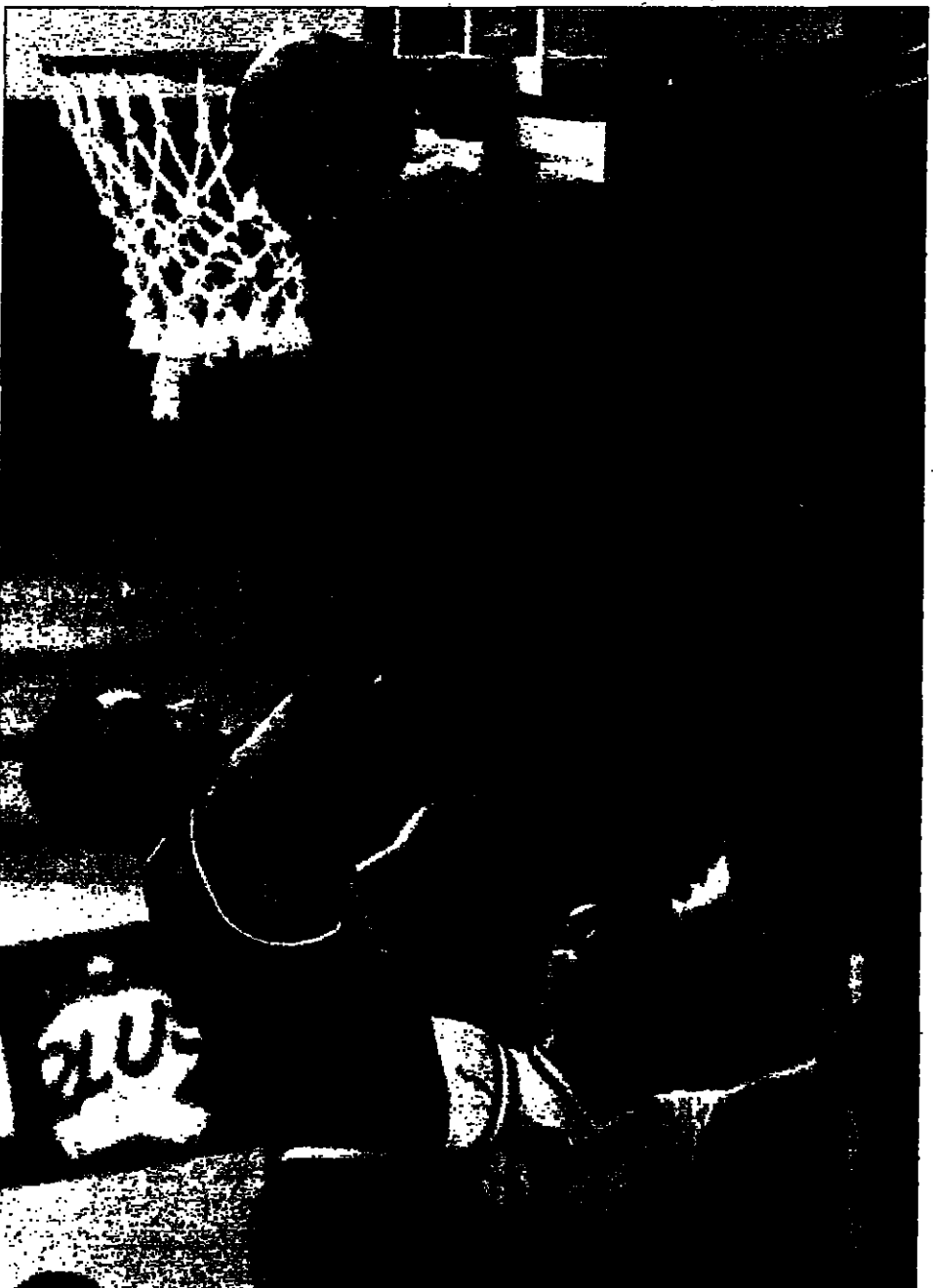
The equestrian team hopes to reverse the fortunes of the seventh place finish in the team event Thursday when the Grand Prix event gets underway today.

The event includes two round with the hurdles set at 135 and 140 centimetres.

Twenty-five of the 37 participating riders will make it to the second round.

Jordan will compete alongside Syria, Qatar, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Libya, Lebanon and Egypt.

Her Royal Highness Princess Haya Bint Al Hussein had won the bronze medal in the 1992 Games in Syria.



Abdul Latif Abed of the UAE (L) tries to score a basket while Ali Al Moghrabi of Saudi Arabia attempts to stop him during the semi-final in the basketball tournament at the Pan Arab Games in Beirut. The Saudis won the match 79-64 (Reuters photo)

TODAY AT	CINEMA TEL:634144	CINEMA TEL:634144	CINEMA TEL:699238	CINEMA TEL:671420	Mabil & Alham Theatre TEL: 625155
	PHILADELPHIA "1"	PHILADELPHIA "2"	PLAZA	CONCORD	CONCORD "1"
	Jim Carrey ... in	Macaulay Culkin & Elijah Wood ... in	Chris O'Donnell...in	CONCORD "1"	Kevin Costner & Rene Russo...in
	LIAR LIAR	THE GOOD SON	MAD LOVE	TIN CUP	Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:00, 8:30, 10:45
	Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30	Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30	Shows: 12:30, 3:15, 5:00	CONCORD "2"	Michael Jordan...in
			Adel Imam...in	SPACEJAM	Shows: 3:30, 6:00 only
			BAKHIT AND ADELAH (PART 2) (Aljardal wal kanaka)		
			Shows: 8:30, 10:30		

The satirical play  
AMN AI ALYA HO  
performance starts at 8:30 p.m.  
The theatre is closed every Friday.  
For reservations call 625155





Yevgeny Kafelnikov of Russia makes a backhand return during his third round match at the Austrian Tennis Open against Italy's Renzo Furlan. Kafelnikov won the match 7-6, 6-7, 6-1 (Reuters photo)

## Ivanisevic cruises, Krajicek claws way to victory

LOS ANGELES (R) — Back from a two-week yachting holiday, Goran Ivanisevic continued to cruise at the \$303,000 Infiniti Open despite the effects of a bad stomach.

The top-seeded reeled off 12 aces to sail past 125th-ranked Frenchman Olivier Delaitre 7-5 7-6 (7-2) Thursday and move into the quarter-finals of the men's tournament.

Ivanisevic suffered from intestinal distress earlier in the week, forcing the 25-year-old Croat to default in Monday's opening-round doubles match.

"Today was the first day I didn't have a temperature," said Ivanisevic. "It's calmed down a little bit but I'm still not 100 per cent. My stomach was swollen, it was some kind of inflammation. Just like a balloon, it was so big."

Nearly sinking from contention was former Wimbledon champion and two-time Los Angeles winner Richard Krajicek, who barely survived with a 7-5 5-7 7-6 (7-5) win over 21-year-old rookie Glenn Weiner.

Krajicek saved four match points in the 10th game of the third set to level the match at 5-5 in a 22-point game. The Dutchman finally dismissed the South African-born qualifier with two strong points after reaching 5-5 in the tiebreak.

Krajicek, who thundered in 24 aces, admitted he did not know who the 280th-ranked Weiner was before the match. "But I got a formal introduction," he joked after the two-hour, 15-minute struggle. "I don't think I'll forget him."

Weiner was thrilled despite the outcome. "It was the best match of my life," he gushed. "It's a thrill to play a top player. It's a dream to play in front of my home crowd and my mom. Wow, wow it was a great experience."

Also advancing to Friday's quarters was sixth seed Jim Courier, who beat qualifier Mahesh Bhupathi of India 7-6 (7-5) 6-3, and unseeded Byron Black of Zimbabwe.

Black took a 6-2 7-6 (7-1) win over Justin Gimelstob, who had ousted Andre Agassi, to set up a clash against Ivanisevic.

Poor performances in the grand slams, losing in the first round at the French and in the second round at

Wimbledon, had prompted the 25-year-old Ivanisevic to take his first holiday after nine years on the tour. He cruised with friends around the Croatian islands to try and relieve his frustrations.

"I needed to get away," said the World No. 3. "I had a great time. I went spear fishing and didn't think about tennis the whole time."

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<b>NORTH</b>	<b>EAST</b>
♠ A 10 5 2	♠ A K Q J 10 9 8 7 4
♥ 2	♥ A K Q J 10 9 8 7 4
♦ A 3	♦ A K Q J 10 9 8 7 4
♣ A J 10 8 7 4	♣ A K Q J 10 9 8 7 4

**WEST**      **EAST**

♠ 3      ♠ Void

♥ 3      ♥ A K Q J 10 9 8 7 4

♦ 3      ♦ A K Q J 10 9 8 7 4

♣ K Q 9 3      ♣ A 2

**SOUTH**      **EAST**

♠ K Q J 10 9 8 7 4

♥ 3      ♥ A 2

♦ A 2      ♦ 6

♣ 6      ♣ 6

The bidding:      **WEST**      **NORTH**      **EAST**

1♠      Pass      2♠      4♠

4♠      Pass      6♠      Pass

Opening lead: Three of ♣

Our vote for one of the best bridge books ever written will be easy. High on the list is "Right Through the Pack," which has recently been re-released in paperback. (Robert Duvall & Norman D. V. Hart. Dutton Press, paperback, 328 pp. Available from The Bridge World, 29 W. 84th St., New York, NY 10024. \$12.95 plus \$3 postage and handling. N.Y. residents add sales tax.) Not only are the hands beautifully composed but the scores accompanying them are clever and

the ending stunning. This story is subtitled "A Trick that Killed Danny."

"East bid hearts vigorously, but North-South were not to be denied, and South was eventually allowed to buy the contract at six spades. West led the three of hearts, and East's seven took the trick. East pondered for a few moments, and then made the superb return of the four of hearts. South had to head the trick with the six; West ruffed with me; and thus forced out dummy's five of trumps."

"All was now over for the declarer. He still had two entries in dummy with which to set up the clubs, but he lacked the third entry to cash them — the entry which the five of spades would have afforded. There was no getting away from South's losing diamond."

"Was that not a beautiful defense? And observe the important part played by the differing values of the low spades and the low hearts. Because East's four of hearts was lower than South's six, West was made to ruff; and because I was one spot higher than my brother, the declarer, North's five of trumps had to go, and dummy was killed. Not a single club could be made except the ace."

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## British town council bans pro boxing

LONDON (R) — A British town council has banned professional boxing on its premises as a health risk, a move decided on Friday as "nonsensical" by an opposition councillor.

Councillors in Bury, greater Manchester, voted 23-19 on Thursday to ban professional boxing in the town's leisure facilities although amateur bouts will continue to be allowed. "There is evidence that continual heading of a football causes damage and we don't ban that on our premises," said deputy council leader John Byrne. "We don't ban smoking and drinking either. In fact, we sell cigarettes and alcohol."

"It was a completely nonsensical decision," added Byrne, who said Bury subsidised an amateur boxing club. "It was totally inconsistent."

Council leader Derek Boden said medical evidence that boxing produced permanent brain damage swayed the vote.

"We do have responsibility and we're trying to act in a responsible way," said Boden. "Our leisure facilities exist to promote health and well-being. We don't see how we can do that if

we allow professional boxing."

Bury, home of British fly-weight champion Ady Lewis, imposed a temporary moratorium on professional bouts after the 1995 death of Scottish boxer James Murray.

Murray died of a brain haemorrhage after a British bantamweight title fight against Drew Docherty in Glasgow at which fans rioted.

The British boxing board of control said it would seek legal advice whether the ban could be challenged.

"We're very surprised that they would pick on the professional side of the sport and not the amateur side when it's the same sport," said BBC spokesman Rob Smith.

"I would have thought that in the not too distant future, Mr Lewis would like to defend his title in front of a home audience."

"It seems very unfair to Ady Lewis and to the youth of Bury," said Smith. He said he knew of at least one council which had imposed a ban but then revoked it when challenged by a promoter.

## MAJOR LEAGUE RESULTS

### American League

Kansas City	5	Minnesota	3
Boston	3	Oakland	0
Seattle	11	Cleveland	1
Toronto	5	Milwaukee	4
White Sox	2	Texas	1
Anaheim at NY Yankees	— Postponed - rain		

### National League

Philadelphia	7	San Francisco	4
San Diego	8	Pittsburgh	6
Houston	10	Montreal	5
Colorado	7	Chicago Cubs	1
NY Mets	3	Los Angeles	1

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## Seles reaches quarters, next meets Martinez

PALO ALTO, California (R) — A recharged Monica Seles began her summer hard court swing by pounding Italy's Rita Grande 6-2 6-1 Thursday in 50 minutes in the second round of the \$450,000 Bank of the West Classic.

The second-seeded Seles is trying to shrug off a seemingly never-ending spate of injuries, the most recent of which is a bad back.

In the past two years, the former number one has been plagued with a bum knee, bad shoulder, painful wrist and a sore Achilles heel.

The Yugoslav-born American says the hundreds of hours she has put in practising the past two years trying to come back from her April 1993 stabbing has been a painful experience.

"It has really taken a toll on my body," Seles said. "Not picking up a racket for two years and then getting right back in it, I probably went too fast."

Grande, however, could not take advantage of Seles's poor condition and was completely overwhelmed by her sharp angles and rapid-fire returns.

"She is so much better than me," Grande said. "She played too fast and too hard for me."

Seles will meet sixth seed Conchita Martinez in the quarter-finals. The Spaniard crushed American Amy Frazier 6-1 6-1 on Thursday. Seles is 11-0 lifetime against Martinez.

Seles has only played eight tournaments in 1997 and has not won a title in 10 months. Seles has also been beaten three times by number one ranked Martina Hingis, who is the top seed here.

Seles does not take comfort in the fact that she has played Hingis closer with every match. "If I get to play Martina again hopefully I'll play better because she's playing really great right now."

Grande said the 16-year-old Hingis is a much better player than Seles at this point.

"Martina is younger, she's enjoying it so much, she's playing so relaxed and she's stronger," Grande said.

Despite her number three ranking, Seles has been coming up empty, at least on her own scale, which weighs her nine Grand Slam crowns against a title-less 1997. But the two-time winner of this tournament believes she can reach the top again.

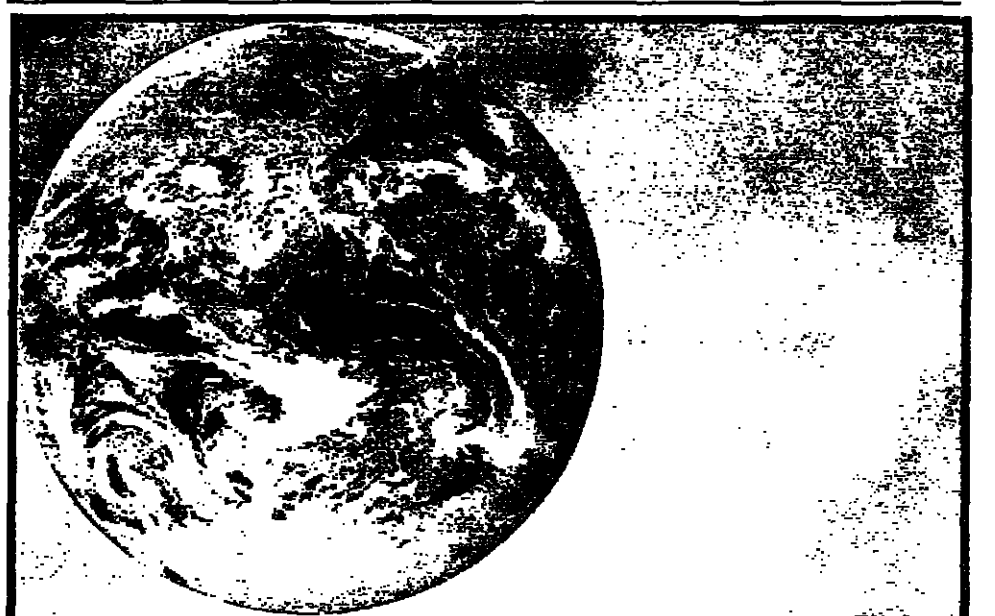
"I really do think I can," Seles said. "But it will take better tennis and a commitment from me. My level has really dropped from four years ago. If I didn't think it was possible, I probably wouldn't be playing."

Off-court, the 23-year-old Seles is spending most of her time giving emotional support to her 63-year-old father and coach, Karoly, who is battling stomach cancer. After Wimbledon, Seles went home to Florida to spend time with him.

"It was really great to see my dad. I don't want to go that long without seeing my family again. It was nice to be home and I feel I kind of recharged my batteries," she said.

Seventh-seeded American Kim Po also moved into the quarter-finals with a 6-3 6-1 victory over Ai Sugiyama of Japan. Po will face third seed Amanda Coetzer of South Africa.

Unseeded American Linda Wild earned a quarter-final match against Hingis by beating Luxembourg's Anne Kremer 6-3 6-4. The other quarter-final will pit fourth seed Lindsay Davenport against Russian Elena Likhovtseva.



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# Scotland promised first parliament since 1707

LONDON (R) — Scotland would get its first parliament for almost 300 years under plans unveiled by the British government Thursday, but ministers insisted it would not be an initial step on the high road to independence.

"Scotland will remain firmly part of the United Kingdom," Scottish Secretary Donald Dewar wrote in a foreword to a policy white paper setting out proposals for an Edinburgh parliament with wide-ranging powers to start sitting in the year 2000.

The establishment of subsidiary parliaments for Scotland and Wales was a key part of the labour party's plans to reform Britain's centralised constitution that helped it sweep to power at the general election, May 1.

The new Scottish body would be the first legislative authority north of the border since the 1707 act of union, which brought together the kingdoms of Scotland and England.

It will be introduced provided Scotland's five million people approve the plans in a referendum, September 11.

The new 129-member assembly, to be elected unlike its London equivalent by a system of proportional representation, would make laws in many areas and administer education, health care, environment, agriculture and arts policies.

Foreign and defence policy, the economic and monetary system, employment legislation, social security and certain sensitive areas such as abortion, broadcast-



Speaking at a media briefing in Edinburgh, Secretary of State for Scotland Donald Dewar outlines the details of the White Paper proposing a separate parliament for Scotland, July 25. The governments plans for a Scottish Assembly have been heavily criticised by the Conservatives for initiating the break up of the United Kingdom (Reuters photo)

ing and gambling would continue to be dealt with by the London government.

The Edinburgh body would rely mainly on a financial grant from the London government, but would have the right to raise or lower tax on earned income by three pence in the pound, giving it a maximum of 450 million pounds (\$753 million) a year.

The White Paper was published two days after a document proposing a similar, but much less powerful, assembly for Wales.

The main opposition Conservative party warned during the election campaign that labour proposals for "devolution" to Scotland and Wales risked the break-up of the United Kingdom.

It said inevitable clashes between Edinburgh and London would fuel demands by the Scottish Nationalists, who won six seats at the election, for full independence.

But the Conservatives were rewarded for their stance by losing all their parliamentary seats in Wales and Scotland, convincing observers that the referendum, in Scotland at least, will be a triumph for labour and their Liberal Democrat devolution allies.

A narrow majority of Scots who voted approved devolution proposals in a referendum held by the last Labour government in 1979, but they were never put into effect.

Mr. Dewar said the new

parliament was needed to bring government closer to ordinary people.

"This reform will not in itself solve the problem of resources or banish the dilemmas of government," he wrote.

"What it can do is connect and involve people with the decisions that matter to them. It can bring a sense of ownership to political debate and a new confidence to our affairs."

The White Paper proposes to cut the 72 Scottish seats in the London parliament, probably to around 60, to head off possible complaints from the English that Scotland is over-represented. The change would not take effect until around 2005.

## Irish prime minister meets Gerry Adams, seeks to reassure Unionists

DUBLIN (AFP) — Irish Prime Minister Bertie Ahern met Friday with Northern Ireland's Nationalist leaders, and they sought afterwards to assure Unionists of their commitment to "exclusively democratic methods."

It was Mr. Ahern's first meeting with Gerry Adams, leader of the Sinn Féin political wing of the Irish Republican Army (IRA), and John Hume, head of the moderate Catholic Social Democratic and Labour party, since the IRA ceasefire last weekend.

The meeting followed the Unionists' rejection Wednesday of an Anglo-Irish plan for paramilitary disarmament that had sought to inject new life into stalled peace talks. They resume in Belfast, September 15, with Sinn Féin present for the first time.

"We recognise that ultimately we can resolve this problem only with the participation and agreement of the Unionist people," their joint statement said.

"The challenge is to find the structures that will protect and accommodate the equal rights and identities of both Unionists and Nationalists, and that can obtain the consent and allegiance of all. 'We are all committed to the achievement of lasting peace and reconciliation on this island based on justice and equality,' it added.

The meeting marked the resumption of full contacts between Sinn Féin and the Irish government that were broken off after the ending of the last IRA ceasefire with a London bomb in February 1996.

Mr. Adams declined to comment on the possibility of Bosnia-style proximity talks if there was no agreement on disarmament, saying, "the governments have given a commitment that they want to see substantive all-party talks beginning, September 15 to deal with all the core issues."

"I think there are a number of weeks to go between now and then. Let the two governments do their best to

bring those about," Mr. Ahern said he would meet with any political leader on ways to advance the peace process.

"Any leader of a political party anywhere on the island of Ireland and most particularly from the north of Ireland that wishes to meet me, I'll meet them," he said after the meeting.

"I would be glad to meet David Trimble at any time," he added, referring to the leader of the Ulster Unionist party, the largest Protestant party and one of the three that rejected the disarmament proposal.

"I dearly hope that the day can be reached in the not too distant future when we can be here and that David Trimble and others would be here with us," said Mr. Ahern.

He said that when Foreign Minister Ray Burke and Northern Ireland Secretary Mo Mowlam meet in Dublin next Tuesday, they would accept the commitment of the two governments to a continuation of the talks process.

## Sudan wants better relations with U.S., Bashir tells envoy

KHARTOUM (AFP) — Sudan is keen to improve its relations with the United States, President Omar Bashir told a visiting U.S. diplomat this week, reports here said Friday.

"Sudan is willing to overcome the obstacles standing on the way of improving its relations with the United States," he told Gare Smith, the U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for Democracy, Human Rights and Labour on a visit Thursday, the official Al Anbaa daily reported Friday.

Sudan, on Washington's list of countries that sponsor terrorism, has been deprived of U.S. economic aid since Khartoum's Islamist military regime came to power in 1989.

Washington said earlier this year it planned to isolate Khartoum for backing terrorism and abuses of human rights.

Indicating steps taken to end Sudan's 14-year civil war, Gen. Bashir appealed to the international community to urge the rebel Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) to "sit down at the negotiating table to spare the blood of the Sudanese."

The SPLA has been fighting Khartoum since 1983 in a war which has cost an estimated one million lives. In April, six southern Sudanese rebel groups signed a peace agreement with Khartoum.

Sudanese officials recently held talks with the U.S. ambassador to Khartoum, Timothy Carney, about a possible U.S. mediation effort. Washington has been accused in the past by Khartoum of backing the southern-based SPLA.

Gen. Bashir told Mr. Smith that the Sudanese government is "genuinely willing for cooperation with the parties which have not yet joined the peace agreement" signed in April.

Quoted in the Sudanese press Thursday, Sudanese Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Moustafa Osman Ismail said the Islamist government had opened a dialogue with the U.S. administration on human rights and other issues.

Mr. Smith arrived in Khartoum Tuesday and met Wednesday with several Sudanese officials including the prosecutor general, Obeid Haj Ali, and the head of a government inquiry into slavery, Mirghani Nasry, officials said.

The U.S. embassy here said Wednesday that Mr. Smith would raise "important human rights questions such as the state of law, freedom of worship, allegations about slavery, the peace process and democracy."

## American mother kidnaps her child in south Lebanon

TYRE (AFP) — A 12-year-old Lebanese girl was kidnapped from her home in south Lebanon Friday by her American mother, police said.

Kathy Robin Ubak, who recently arrived in Lebanon and was staying at some friends' house in Beirut, allegedly kidnapped her daughter Lina Hallak from her home in the southern port city of Tyre, Lebanese police officials said.

Ubak, 48, who had asked the permission to take her daughter out for a walk, immediately whisked the child in a car to an

unknown destination, according to police.

"I suspect that Lina was taken to the U.S. embassy and that they are waiting there to receive passports to travel to the U.S. because my daughter's passport is still at home," her father, electrical engineer Hassan Hallak, told Agence France Presse.

He said his ex-wife regularly came to Lebanon to visit the child since their divorce 10 years ago.

Mr. Hallak, who is now remarried with a three-year-old son, said he alerted the police as well as bor-

der and airport security authorities.

In 1994, a three-year-old French-Lebanese boy, Rayan Kadi, was kidnapped by force from a Beirut school playground by his French mother, Violaine Delahais, who was accompanied by two armed men. Delahais, who was then living in France and still fighting a divorce battle with Rayan's father, had managed to return to France with the child despite the fact that Lebanese borders and airport authorities had been alerted by the father.

## Turkish leaders to meet military

ISTANBUL (R) — Turkey's political and military leaders were to gather Friday for the first meeting of the powerful National Security Council since the new secularist government took office, officials said. They said the council was to meet at an army base in Istanbul at 1130 GMT after laying a wreath at the city's main monument to Turkey's secularist founder Kemal Ataturk.

Newspapers said the council would discuss Islamist businesses and their alleged support for Islamist activism, which the army says poses the greatest threat to Turkey's stability.

The council led the secularist onslaught against the previous Islamist-led government of Necmettin Erbakan, putting pressure on it to adopt measures to clamp down on what the generals called Islamic fundamentalist activism.

After months of wrangling with the military and the country's secularist elite, Mr. Erbakan resigned last month, opening the way to Mr. Yilmaz's loose right-left secularist alliance to take power two weeks ago.

The nine-member council is made up of four military chiefs, the prime minister and three senior ministers. The president chairs the meetings.

Meanwhile, two people were injured Friday by a concussion bomb which exploded in a cafeteria in this southeastern city, reports said.

The two men were passers-by hurt by flying glass from the cafeteria's shattered windows, the Anatolian news agency reported. No customers were reported injured.

## Turkish court takes over Ciller probe from military

ANKARA (R) — A Turkish civilian court Friday took over a military inquiry into charges that former Prime Minister Tansu Ciller accepted money from abroad to work against the national interest, Anatolian news agency said.

"The Army's prosecutor office decided the probe was out of its jurisdiction and sent back the investigation file to the Ankara state security court late on Thursday," Anatolian said.

The state security court had previously ruled that the case was outside its jurisdiction but began to look at the claims anew on Friday after the military decision, Anatolian said.

The army, which has the power to try civilians on charges relating to military matters, launched an investigation earlier this month against Mrs. Ciller based on accusations made by far-left leader Dogu Perincek.

Mr. Perincek said that Mrs. Ciller, who became Turkey's first woman prime minister in 1993, had worked for the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency (CIA).

Ms. Ciller denies the charges and other corruption-related accusations against her and her businessman husband.

She outraged the secularist establishment, spearheaded by the military, by taking her pro-western True Path Party into a coalition last year with Islamist Necmettin Erbakan's Welfare Party.

Mrs. Ciller served as foreign minister in that government until it collapsed and was replaced by new Prime Minister Mesut Yilmaz's secularist alliance last month.

However, relations have warmed since Iran's Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Velayati travelled to Cairo in May on a fence-mending visit, and since the election of moderate cleric Mohammad Khatami as Iranian president.

Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak said Wednesday that Iran is seeking closer military ties with his country to counter growing Israeli-Turkish defence cooperation.

The two countries have been at odds since former Egyptian President Anwar Al Sadat welcomed the

## Egypt, Iran to renew economic ties

CAIRO (AFP) — Egypt said Friday it plans to strengthen its economic ties with Iran for the first time since breaking off diplomatic relations after the 1979 Islamic Revolution in Tehran.

An Egyptian trade ministry spokesman, quoted by the daily Al Akhbar, said "the coming period will be marked by a large increase in Iranian investment in Egypt." The spokesman said an Iranian business delegation was expected in Cairo in the coming days to

seal joint projects worth a total of \$236 million, notably in the electric appliances and clothes industries.

He said the delegation would also agree the sale of Egyptian food products to Iran.

A trade fair of Egyptian products is also to be organised in Tehran for the first time since the 1979 revolution.

The two countries have been at odds since former Egyptian President Anwar Al Sadat welcomed the



## ORIGINAL SHAKESPEARE AT JERASH

Performers of the British troupe the Original Shakespeare Company grab the audience at the Jerash festival Thursday and Friday as they played Midsummer Night's Dream (Photo by Youssef Allan)

## Hollywood stars sue Australian magazines

SYDNEY (R) — Three leading Hollywood stars have begun defamation proceedings against Australian magazines, an Australian law firm said Friday. Bruce Willis and Demi Moore are suing New Idea over a story that said Moore's obsession with exercise and an eating disorder were driving the couple apart. In a separate case, comedian Jim Carrey has begun an action over an article in the Woman's Day magazine which alleged he had sexually harassed actresses Jennifer Tilly, Courtney Cox, Alicia Silverstone, Drew Barrymore and Courtney Love. The legal firm of Mallesons Stephen Jacques said in a statement that the three stars had issued defamation proceedings in the Supreme Court of Victoria on Thursday. "Bruce Willis, Demi Moore and Jim Carrey all intend to pursue their legal rights vigorously and are confident of vindication," the firm's partner John Waters said.

## Failed nude Taiwan politico now plans nude nuptial

TAIPEI (R) — Taiwan's stripper politician Hsu Shao-lan said she would wed in October and planned something typically flamboyant — nude nuptials out of doors, with the public invited. "I feel if a nation can appreciate and comfortably face the art of nudity, it will be a more open, happier and healthier nation," Spinster Hsu told state television. "This is the message I want to send through the wedding." Hsu shot to fame as a candidate in Taiwan's early 1990s parliamentary elections with audacious stunts such as bursting naked through a flag of the ruling Nationalist Party and titillating voters with sexually suggestive slogans.

## Hendrix guitar could fetch \$300,000 at auction

LONDON (R) — A Fender Stratocaster guitar owned by rock legend Jimi Hendrix is to be the star of a London auction where it could fetch more than \$300,000, auctioneers said. The mid-60's instrument was given by Hendrix to his New York neighbour Al Cooper, founder of the rock band Blood, Sweat and Tears who was also a regular session musician for Bob Dylan and the Rolling Stones. "The appearance of this guitar on the market offers collectors a rare opportunity to acquire a genuinely owned and played Hendrix stratocaster," said a Sotheby's spokesman of the September 17 sale.

## Magician Copperfield sues Paris Match for defamation

LOS ANGELES (R) — Magician David Copperfield launched what could be his greatest trick — prying \$30 million damages from Paris Match magazine for alleging his romance with supermodel Claudia Schiffer was a sham. "That claim is absolutely false in every respect," said his defamation suit filed in Los Angeles superior court against the French magazine's publishers and a rival magician, Herbert Becker. It said Paris Match — "a sensationalist photo magazine" — had spread around the world that the couple pretended to be romantically involved, but that Schiffer was actually being paid by Copperfield to accompany him and pretend to be his fiancée.